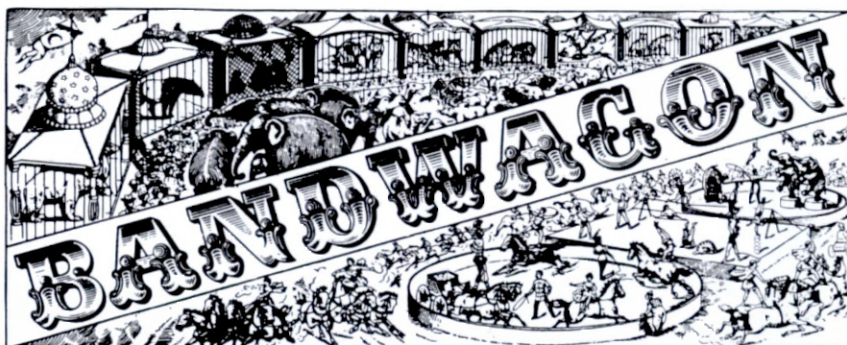


BANDWAGON



MARCH-APRIL 1987



THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MARCH-APRIL 1987

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor and Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

Giraffes have been part of the American circus scene almost continuously since Rufus Welch imported the first group of them in 1838. The photo on this month's cover was taken by Dick Miller, the official Ringling-Barnum photographer, during the winter of 1951-1952 at the Sarasota winter quarters. The adult giraffe in the foreground is Edith, a Nubian female acquired by Ringling-Barnum in 1936, and the baby is her calf, a female named Gloria who was born at Boston Garden on May 10, 1951. In the background is Ingrid who was in a different corral than the one with her name on the feeding trough.

Edith was a good animal, popular with everyone on the show. She was broken to lead and appeared in the 1938, 1939, and 1948 specs. She was originally known as Soudana, but around 1944 she picked up the name Edith, no doubt taking it from Edith Conway Ringling, wife of Robert Ringling.

She was a good breeder and produced two other calves, Henrietta in 1940, and Boston in 1946. She died at the Sarasota quarters over the winter of 1954-1955.

Ingrid was a reticulated giraffe. Reticulated have very dark, large, square looking spots separated by thin, bright white, thread-like lines. By contrast, the Nubian giraffe has smaller spots that do not stand out as sharply against the background and have something of a hazy appearance. Prior to World War II most giraffes in this country were Nubians. Today the situation is the opposite with reticulated being more common.

Ingrid was one of a pair purchased by the show in 1950. She was mated with Boston, a union which produced calves in 1954, 1956, and 1958. These off spring were hybrids, half reticulated and half Nubian. This is not uncommon as the various races or sub-species of giraffe breed freely with one another. Thanks to animal expert Richard J. Re-

ynolds III for the biographical information on these animals. Photo from Pfening archives.

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THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

After extensive discussions with the Secretary-Treasurer and the *Bandwagon* Editor, it has been decided to raise the annual dues from \$16.00 to \$17.00. This is the first increase in five years. Prior to that they were raised every year but one from 1975 to 1982. This increase is only 6 1/4%, the smallest percentage increase in over a decade. A higher amount was considered, but Secretary-Treasurer Johann Dahlinger suggested that we instead charge all new members \$18.00 regardless of the time of year they join. They will be sent the back issues necessary to receive a year's worth of *Bandwagons*. Previously, new members paid on a pro-rated basis and received only the issues from the time they started until the end of the fiscal year. This change should bring in the equivalent of an additional \$1.00 increase per member in dues. We also expect that increased membership resulting from sending an application and brochure to new CFA members who do not belong to the CHS will also hike our revenues. The Secretary-Treasurer is spearheading this effort. Furthermore, starting in an issue or two the *Bandwagon* will be laid out on a computer which will have the doubly beneficial effect of lowering our typesetting costs and allowing the Editor much greater freedom in page design. The Editor will have more to say on this important change in a forthcoming issue.

The dues notices will be sent out soon. We again will have Sustaining and Contributing memberships for \$25 and \$50. The extra revenue these categories produced in past years have been essential in maintaining the size and quality of the magazine and I encourage those who can to consider giving this larger amount. This year we have initiated a third category of special membership called the Concessionaires Club for those who wish to give \$100. While I do not expect many members to contribute at this high level, the number should be more than if we didn't ask. Starting this year all Sustaining, Contributing and Concessionaires Club members will receive a special certificate of appreciation created by member Blake Kellogg, a University of Wisconsin journalism professor whose prose rivals Roland Butler's. I urge all those who can to consider paying their dues in one of these three larger amounts.

Our Secretary-Treasurer has also purchased a computer at her own expense on which CHS data will be entered. While this process will take

some time, she will be able eventually to generate a new roster. This should be ready for circulation to the members by the end of the year, if not sooner.

In the twenty-five years I have been associated with the CHS I can never remember a time when so many procedural and administrative changes have been made in so short a period of time. I am very excited about this as we appear on the brink of an era of greater financial stability combined with a bigger and better *Bandwagon*, due in large part to the use of computers. My review of the 1986 season in the last issue was the first article we ever published which was type set directly from a computer disk with no manuscript involved. Most of the copy in this issue has been generated by computer, including the text you are now reading. Eventually computers will set the type of the entire magazine as well as assist in the lay out. The savings should be significant; the appearance should be striking.

Fred D. Pfening III

1987 CONVENTION UPDATE

Plans are firming up for our 1987 convention. Inserted in this issue is a registration card for the Marc Plaza Hotel in Milwaukee, our convention headquarters. This card should be returned directly to the hotel as soon as possible as the number of rooms reserved for the CHS is limited, and may not be available after mid-June.

The convention's format will be similar to last year's. All day-time events will take place at the Great Circus Parade grounds. The Circus World Museum has again kindly allowed us to use their cookhouse during off hours for presentations. We will have talks by movers and shakers in the business, and a behind the scenes look at both the Great American Circus and the Great Circus Parade. Evenings will be at the hotel, and will feature classic circus films and historical papers. The Friday night banquet speaker will be a top name in the circus business, and the auction is sure to include some very fine and rare pieces of circusiana.

A convention registration card is also enclosed in this issue. The fee is \$43.00 per member and \$40.00 each for spouses, children and guests. Payment entitles the holder to attend all CHS functions including a performance of the Great American Circus, a meal in the Circus World Museum cookhouse, the banquet on Friday, July 10, all presentations, tours and the auction. Registrants will also receive a participant pass which will allow them on the parade grounds the morning of the parade. For those registering after July 1, the fee is \$48.00 per member and \$45.00 for each spouse, child, or guest.

The excitement begins on Wednesday July 8 when the Great American

Circus sets up on the parade grounds in the morning and the Great Circus Train from Baraboo arrives in the afternoon. Members will be able to pick up their convention schedules and other materials at the CHS registration area next to the circus fans tent on the parade grounds that afternoon and at the Marc Plaza that evening. Registration will continue on the grounds and at the hotel throughout the meeting.

All members are encouraged to bring material for the auction. This event is always great fun, and gives members the opportunity to add to their collection. Last year's auction raised \$2700, all of which went to maintaining the size and quality of the *Bandwagon*. The reverse side of the registration card in this issue has a space to note if you plan to donate anything for this event. We still have places on the agenda for historical papers. Space is provided on the registration card to indicate if you wish to give one.

Last year a number of members wanted to buy grandstand seats for the parade, but found them sold out. Those wishing to do so this year should call the Greater Milwaukee Convention and Visitors Bureau at their toll free number 800-231-0903 for further information on purchasing them.

True addicts are advised that on Friday, July 17 the Carson and Barnes Circus will appear in Delavan which is 50 miles southwest of Milwaukee. A number of special events are planned including a cemetery tour and buffet with show personnel. Contact Gordon Yadon at P. O. Box 1, Delavan, Wisconsin 53115 for more information.

This year's convention is sure to be long remembered. Send in your registration card as soon as possible to assure your participation in what is sure to be a memorable occasion.

NEW DIRECTORS

The recent deaths of Directors Chang Reynolds and Jim McRoberts created vacancies in their divisions. Orin C. King of Topeka, Kansas has been appointed the new Director for Division Six, and Michael D. Sporrer of Bellevue, Washington has been appointed for Division Eight. Both of them are long time members. Each has done extensive work in his local and state newspapers and both are quite knowledgeable on the history of the circus.

PHOTOS

Four 8x10 BW photos of
Cole Bros.
Train wreck July 27, 1945
Brainard, Minn.

\$12.00 Postpaid

Bill Watson
3522 R. Willow Ave.
Castle Shannon, Pa. 15234

The Al G. Barnes' Big Four-Ring Wild Animal Circus

by Chang Reynolds

Season of 1928

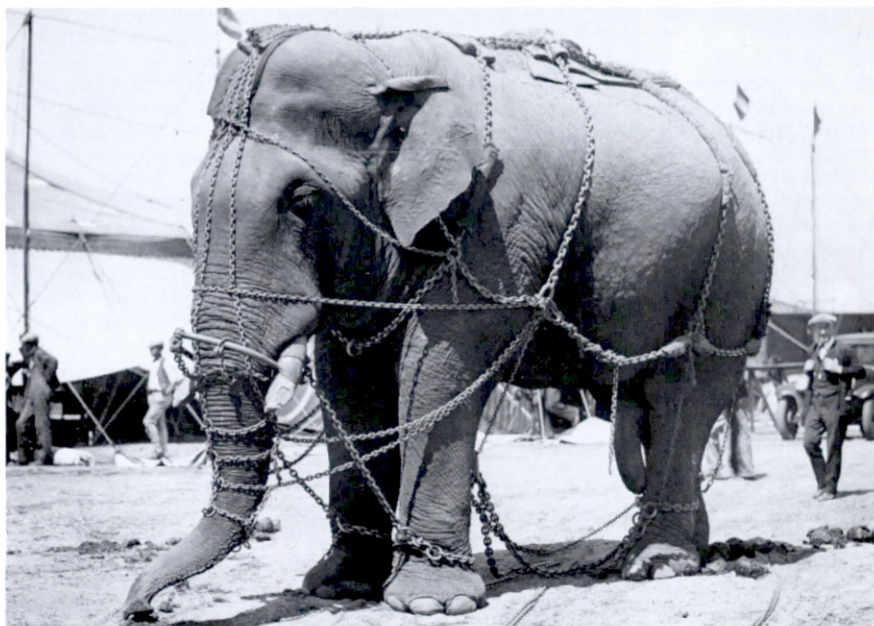
This article is the last in the series on the Al G. Barnes Circus written by the late Chang Reynolds. Reynolds completed it in the fall of 1986; it is the last circus article he wrote. The dramatic and eventful 1929 season will be extensively covered in the future by another author.

The year opened with great activity at the Barnes' quarters in Baldwin Park, California. Reports from the show in early January indicated a rather hectic hustle and bustle for the folks departing on 18 January for Honolulu. There was the usual work in films being carried on during the winter months and much work on construction at the new quarters.

First National Film Corporation finished a film at the quarters entitled "Do It Again," starring Mary Astor and Lloyd Hugh. Marshall Neilan was the director. The show also had a contract with the Fox Company for a large production which started two weeks later. This was titled "The Four Devils" and was directed by F.W. Murnau. This same film company was also engaged to make a series of animal comedies. The Klinkhardt Midgets had been busy at the Hal Roach Studios and at the Educational Film Company. Other members of the Barnes' contingent were working in vaudeville.

The work at the new quarters involved the finishing of the new railroad tracks and the building of sheds for the horses and other animals. It was noted that the magnificent Tusko had been safely transferred to the new quarters. Visitors at the Baldwin Park site were Mr. and Mrs. Howard King, W. V. Hill, Red McIntyre, Sky Clark, Wallie Gollmar and son, and Honest Bill Newton. It was also announced on 7 January that Austin C. King would have the side-show with the circus in 1928. It marked his tenth tour with the Al G. Barnes' Show.

Former Barnes' clown, George B. Rearick, wrote a letter to *Billboard* (published in the 21 January issue) in which he stated that he had been in clown alley on the Barnes' Circus during the 1924-26 tours. He mentioned that during the winter months he had worked in several circus films. At the present time (1928) he had been working in the Apollo Theater orchestra in Janesville, Wisconsin. Two circus films had been featured at the theater in recent weeks. They were "The



The Mighty Tusko is shown in heavy chains on an Al G. Barnes Circus lot during the 1928 season. Pfening Archives.

Clown" and "Spangles" in which Barnes' show people had been used.

Another letter in the same issue of *Billboard*, written by Edward Silbon, indicated that he had been employed at the Fox

The 1928 season was the last under the ownership of Al G. Barnes. This is one of the last photos taken of the famous showman. Pfening Archives.



West Coast Studios since his arrival in early November as gymnastic instructor to teach the four principals for F. W. Murnau's circus production, "The Four Devils." The four stars were Janet Gaynor, Charles Morton, Nancy Drexel and Barry Norton who did some stunts on the flying trapeze. Mr. and Mrs. Silbon were scheduled to return east at the end of January to play five weeks for Shrine Circuses.

A note from Baldwin Park, again in the 21 January issue of *Billboard*, stated that work had been started on the new zoo, which would cover 20 acres. Work had commenced on a four-ring training barn with seating capacity for 2500 people. Public performances were scheduled for each Sunday. Frank Rooney was the superintendent for the building of this new zoo. He had 200 men at work at quarters. Mitt Karl was in charge of the cafeteria and Judd Bullock, trainmaster, was in charge of building the new track for the train. Bloomer English was superintendent of the stock not making the Honolulu trip. Charles Cook, manager, had rented the balance of the stock and wild animals to the Fox Studio. This article re-affirmed that Barnes owned 300 acres of land at Baldwin Park and that 40 acres were to be used for the zoo and winter quarters. The balance was to be subdivided into city lots.

The same article also affirmed that



This 1928 view shows Barnes loaded flats in the McCook, Nebraska, rail yards. The flats appear to have been painted orange with red lettering. Joe Fleming photo.

Tusko would be on the season's tour in 1928. In addition, the show had purchased Black Diamond, an elephant nearly equal in size to the famous Tusko. They were to be billed as Tusko and The Mighty Tusko. This second male had first appeared on the Gentry Bros. Circus in 1900. He remained with that show until about 1914 when he was sold to William P. Hall along with a female named Trilby. In 1915 Diamond was on the Barton & Bailey Circus and on Wheeler Bros. Enormous Shows in 1916. During the next two years the big bull was with the R. T. Richards Circus. Apparently he remained at the Hall farm in 1919 but was with the Atterbury Show from 1920-1924. In 1925 and 1926 he appeared on Monroe Bros. Circus, followed in 1927 by an appearance on Wilson's Greater Show. From this point he moved to the Al G. Barnes' Circus for 1928 and 1929. He was executed at Kennedy, Texas in late 1929 after he had killed a lady on the street while being moved from the train to the circus lot.

By the end of January it was reported that J. B. Austin, former general agent, had left the Al G. Barnes' Circus and joined the staff of the American Circus Corporation. Henry L. (Buck) Massie, contracting agent, replaced Austin as general agent.

Early in February Al G. Barnes made a trip to a hospital following an incident with a zebra. He had been leading the animal around the winter quarters grounds when it became frightened and ran, dragging Barnes for some distance. While attempting to gain control the owner was bitten and lacerated about the head and shoulders.

The 18 February issue of *Billboard* contained a glowing article relative to the opening of the Barnes' performance in Honolulu on 28 January. The show paraded on time but no matinee was presented. Instead three performances were given at night with people seated on the ground inside the bleachers at all three performances. There were forty-six mem-

bers of the Barnes' Circus present and they moved each performance in one hour and fifteen minutes. On arrival in Honolulu the performers found the big top erected and the dressing and pad tops ready to receive them. Bert Howard and eight department heads plus the stock had preceded the rest of the personnel and had tended to the preliminary duties.

On board the ship during the voyage the Barnes' performers had presented two performances with Austin C. King as master of ceremonies. At the opening in Honolulu Bill Evans' freak animals did big business. Crowds also flocked to the No. 2 side-show which featured Lotus, the big hippopotamus, and Prof. Prescott and Czerny, mind-reading act. The big show program in the Hawaiian city was as follows:

1. Grand Entry led by Charles Rederrick and his band
2. Tandem riders with Margaret Graham and Jerry Schaffer, and Patsy Clancy and Andrea Gallagher Howard, riders.
3. Capt. John Meyer's Royal Bengal Tigers, with clowns on the track.
4. Matlock Troupe, wire act.
5. "Jerry," the singing mule, with Duch Marco and William Hundley.
6. Comedy carrying and riding act - Jack MacAfee, Irene Grizzelle, Dixie Whitaker, and Anna Velde.
7. Comedy acrobats - The Matlocks
8. Comedy juggler - Toby Tyler
9. Football elephants, worked by E. W. Jackson, and the clowns.
10. Riding tiger - Marie Gallagher
11. Dance on stilts - Toby Tyler
12. Aerial ladders with electrical effects (ten women)
13. Twelve horse Liberty act, presented by Max Sable
14. Zebras and camels worked by Joe Bennett
15. Elephant number worked by Austin King and E. W. Jackson
16. Clown walkaround and comedy aerial number
17. Revolving ladder acts - Jack MacAfee and partner and the Matlocks
18. Single Trapeze - Andrea Gallagher Howard
19. High-school horses - Max Sable
20. High-jumping horses - Irene Grizzelle and Andrea Gallagher Howard



Baggage wagons and cages loaded on Barnes flat cars in McCook, Nebraska in 1928. Most cages were painted white that season. Joe Fleming photo.

21. Female fighting lions, Capt. Meyers, trainer

A brief review of the line-up as presented above leaves little doubt that the fans were enchanted for each of the seventy-five minutes of the performance. It was purely an Al G. Barnes' production with plenty of animals acts interspersed with good circus acts.

Back on the mainland it was announced that the regular Al G. Barnes' Circus would open the 1928 tour with a two-day stand at Baldwin Park on 20-21 March. The department heads preparing for the long season's route were: Charles

Al G. Barnes newspaper ad for the McCook, Nebraska, stand July 4, 1928. Joe Fleming collection.

McCOOK, NEBR.

Wednesday, July 4th

THE SHOW THAT'S DIFFERENT

AL G. BARNES

BIG 5 RING

CIRCUS

THE SUPERB SPECTACLE

ALADDIN AND THE PARADE OF GOLD

1080 PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE CHINESE BEAUTY LOLA LEE CHONG

TUSKO AND THE MIGHTY TUSKO

THE TWO MASTODONS

THE LARGEST BEASTS THAT WALK THE EARTH TODAY

TRANSPORTED IN TWO SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED R.R. CARS

KLINKHARDT'S EQUESTRIAN MIDGETS

14 TINY HORSEMEN FROM BAVARIA

BIGGEST TRAVELING ZOO ON EARTH

TWO PERFORMANCES DAILY

DOORS OPEN 1 AND 7 PM. - RAIN OR SHINE

ADMISSION: ADULTS 75c. CHILDREN 50c

Cook, general manager; H. L. Massie, general agent; Frank Rooney, superintendent; H. I. McGlathery, treasurer; Sam Thomason, auditor; Dick Wakefield, timekeeper; John T. Backman, equestrian director; and Jack Glines, manager of the advance and his crew who had already left the quarters early in March in the bright red car.

Meanwhile, on the Fox lot in Hollywood, the Hart Bros. and the Flying Codonas were preparing to leave on 26 March for the Madison Square Garden date with the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. The Cadonas had spent twelve weeks and the Hart Bros. seven weeks working on the film "Four Devils."

The entire Barnes' roster of superintendents and department heads was listed in the 24 March issue of *Billboard*, which made the newstands about a week after the show opened. The performers, management staff, workers and animals had arrived back in the States from the Hawaiian Islands on the second day of March. This gave the large traveling contingent a couple of weeks to prepare for the opening on the 20th of the month.

The complete roster for 1928 was as follows: Al G. Barnes, proprietor; Charles C. Cook, manager; H. I. McGlathery, treasurer; Sam Thomason, auditor; H. L. Massie, general agent and railroad contractor; W. J. Long, local contractor; E. F. Maxwell, local contractor; C. J. McDonald, contracting press agent; A. H. Priddy, advance press agent; Thomas Dawson, press agent back with the show; Austin C. King, Manager of the side-show; John T. Backman, equestrian director; Frank Rooney, superintendent; Harry X. Clark, superintendent of privileges; Charles Redrick, musical director; Nels Lausten, superintendent of reserved seat tickets; Casper Jensen, superintendent of canvas; Judd Bullock, trainmaster; W. F. "Mike" Tusdy, boss hostler; Ed Veersteeg, superintendent of lights; Bert Howard, superintendent of properties; Bloomer English, superintendent of ring stock; Elmer Linggo, 24-hour agent; J. O. Nance, superintendent of elephants; Louis Roth, superintendent of animals; Bill Howard, blacksmith; Jack Glines, manager of advance car No. 1; William Dale, checker-up; Charles C. Cook, legal adjuster; and B. M. Cunningham, announcer.

This circus moved on 30 cars in 1928.

Al G. Barnes cage No. 107 enroute to the McCook lot in 1928. Joe Fleming photo.



Al G. Barnes big top on the lot in Long Beach, California, March 27, 1928. Mathie photo in Bradbury collection.

It had used the same size train for a number of years and consisted of one advance car, seven stock cars, fourteen flat cars, and eight coaches. In addition to the Barnes' show there were ten other circuses moving by rail this season. They were: Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey (100 cars); Sells-Floto Circus (30 cars); Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus (30 Cars); John Robinson Circus (25 cars); Sparks Circus (20 cars); Robbins Bros. Circus (30 cars); 101 Ranch Wild West (30 cars); Walter L. Main Circus (10 cars); Gentry Bros. Circus (15 cars); and the Christy Bros. Circus (20 cars).

A brief review of the show appeared in the next issue of *Billboard* in which it was stated that the "Al G. Barnes' Circus was successfully launched Tuesday at 'Albarnes,' or Baldwin Park. The attendance was very large as the crowds thronged to witness a program that moved rapidly and showed a marked improvement in every way."

A few of the featured performers were listed: the Matlocks, tight-wire artists; the Davenport Family, riders; the Aerial Behees; the Flying Le Tourneaus, headed by Babe Le Tourneau; Klinkhardt's riding midgits, fourteen in number; Louis Roth and his mixed group of performing wild animals; and Betty Kenyon Roth, and her wrestling tiger.

The article continued: "The program is preceded by the spectacle, *Aladdin and the Parade of Gold*, in which Lola Lee Chong, Chinese beauty is featured." It also mentioned the horse show in which 180 trained horses were used and the three herds of elephants with the show, all of which performed. (This last statement stretched the truth a bit because Tusko and the Mighty Tusko did not work in the rings). Among the great number of equines presented were the dancing horses presented by Max Sable.

After two days in Baldwin Park, the cir-

cus traveled to Pomona, Riverside, San Bernardino, and then spent two days on the San Diego lot. A rather unusual advertisement appeared in the *San Bernardino Daily Sun* on 21 and 22 March. It featured a large photo of Tusko standing beside a baby elephant. It offered free tickets to the circus to any youngsters securing one new subscription for three months to either *The Sun* or the *Evening Telegram* - the two San Bernardino newspapers.

The Sun also carried a photo of two black bears pulling a chariot driven by Rose Shirley. The article accompanying this photo contained the usual material concerning the time of the two performances and the outside free acts in front of the side-show at 12:30 and 6:30 p.m. It also declared that due to the tremendous size of the organization no street parade would be given due to lack of transportation for the parade vehicles on the three special trains used by the Barnes' Circus. The show grounds were located at the Santa Fe Athletic Grounds in San Bernardino.

From San Diego the show moved to Long Beach, Santa Monica, and Pasadena before arriving in Los Angeles for a ten-day stand. The displays presented in the program at that time were:

1. The Spectacle - *Aladdin and the Parade of Gold*
2. Al G. Barnes riding "Fulldress"
3. Klinkhardt's Midgits and Mr. and Mrs. Skyhigh (giants)
4. Hippopotamus, Lotus, on the track
5. Three and five-gaited, prize winning, Saddle Horses
6. Ring 1 - Trained ponies and leaping greyhounds - Mark Smith Arena - Bengal Tigers - Louis Roth Ring 3 - Trained ponies and leaping greyhounds - William Keffer
7. Ring 1 - Elephants - Billy Mack,

The Barnes water wagon with a four horse hitch on the 1928 McCook lot. Joe Fleming photo.





Irene Murray, Anna Velde Arena - Riding Bengal Tiger on an Arabian horse Ring 3 - Elephants - Patsy Clancy, Leta Behee, Dixie Whitaker

8. Trapeze and performing birds
9. Ring 1 - Tandem-driven horses
Arena - African lions with Bert Nelson
Ring 3 - Tandem-driven horses

10. Musical elephants and clowns on the hippodrome track

11. Trapeze - Mlle. LeTourneau
12. Ring 1 - Wire - Matlock Troupe
Ring 3 - Wire - Backman Troupe and Authur Burson

13. Vocal number by "Song Bird" and her trained pigeons - Florence Tozier

14. Ring 1 - "Bimbo," singing donkey
Ring 3 - The Great Ortiz, head balancer

15. Ring 1 - Riding Act - The Stick Davenport Troupe
Ring 3 - Riding Act - Mark Smith Troupe

16. Cloud Swing and Revolving Ladders

17. Ring 1 - Performing Zebras - Lee Hauze Arena - Mixed Group (lions and tigers) - Louis Roth
Ring 3 - Performing Zebras - Jack Cavanaugh

18. Aerial Display - twenty people
19. Ring 1 - Spotted Liberty Horses - Mark Smith Arena - Wrestling Tiger - Betty Kenyon
Roth Ring 3 - Cream-colored Liberty Horses - Max Sable

20. Ring 1 - Performing Elk, Zebra, Water Buffalo and Bison - Wm. Keffer
Arena - Polar Bears - Marie Gallagher
Ring 3 - Seals and Sea Lions - Prof. Charles

21. Clowns
22. Ring 1 - Posing Girls
Arena - Posing Horses
Ring 3 - Posing Dogs

23. Ring 1 - Dog Act - Stella Keffer
Roman Rings - Le Tourneau Troupe
Arena - The Riding Four - Kunze Bros.
Roman Rings - Behee Family
Ring 3 - Dog Act - Alice Parker

24. Ring 1 - Comedy Riders - The Klinkhardt Troupe
Arena - "Rex," the

The Barnes show setting up on the lot in San Antonio, Texas, September 17, 1928. Immediately behind the stake gang is 28 foot baggage wagon No. 81. that carried seat jacks and stringers. Tom Scaperlanda photo.

riding lion Ring 3 - Comedy Riders - The Klinkhardt Troupe

25. Slide for Life - Auther Burson

26. Dancing Horses (40)

27. Ring 1 - Elephants and Acrobats - Le Tourneaus Troupe
Arena - African Lions - Louis Roth
Ring 3 - Elephants and Acrobats - The Matlock Troupe

28. Finale - America; followed by Hippodrome Races

The side-show lineup included Bert Price, tattooed man, Prescott and Czerny, mentalists; Paul Desmuke, armless wonder; Prince Manly with Punch and Judy; Mrs. Opal Manly, snakes; Fay, Magician; Nabor Feliz, Indian clay modeler; Prof. Lowman, musical marvel; Miss Ethel Price, sword lady; High Bill, Texas giant; Elizabeth and Gustane, Bavarian midgets; and Hawaiian entertainers with Anna Velde as featured dancer.

A report from Los Angeles indicated that large crowds attended the performances during the ten-day run in that city. There were five turnaways recorded during that period. It was conceded that the performance still needed smoothing off in some spots. Dixie Whitaker, the featured equestrienne, was injured on 1 April when she fell from her horse while doing a standing ride. She suffered a broken shoulder and possible internal injuries from the fall.

After leaving Los Angeles on the night of 8 April, the Barnes' show played Oxnard and Santa Barbara on the coast and

Barnes baggage wagon with four elephant hitch in San Antonio in 1928. The elephant with the single is the male, Vance. Tom Scaperlanda photo.



then moved inland to Lancaster for the 11 April date. A slow haul over the Tehachapi Mountains brought the organization to Bakersfield in the San Joaquin Valley for the next stand. Nearly two weeks was spent touring the towns at the southern end of the Valley before the show reached San Francisco for a four-day stand on 26 April.

A report from the show at this time stated that attendance records were high and, if the crowds continued to appear, the 1928 tour would be the most successful of the twenty-seven years that the Barnes Circus had been operating. Charles Cook reported that after being out for forty-two days the take was more than \$60,000 greater than during the same period in 1927. At Stockton, where the show had played for the last dozen years, it grossed \$3000 for the day more than the biggest previous day in that city.

The four-day run in San Francisco resulted in straw houses at the Friday and Saturday night performances and three performances on Sunday to accommodate the crowds. The circus went to San Mateo, Palo Alto, and Stockton before the four-day stand in Oakland where the Barnes' show did the biggest four-day business ever done during the many visits to that city. The Al G. Barnes' Circus encountered its first rainy day in San Rafael - the 42nd day on tour.

The big crowds kept pouring onto the lot as the show moved on to Santa Rosa, Sacramento, and other northern California cities. Special notice was given in *Billboard* articles at this time to the outstanding performances of Bill, Babe and Bertha Letourneau, the Klinkhardt Midgets, and the Matlock Family. It was also mentioned that Everett Whitney had rejoined the show and was in charge of the front door. At the end of May, Mike Golden was made the manager of the advance car. Jack Glines, who had served Al G. Barnes for a number of years, left to handle business of his own.

The Barnes Show continued to move along its usual route into the Northwest after leaving Mount Shasta on 13 May. Six towns in Oregon were made before the three-day stand in Portland on 21-23 May. On the night of 22 May two performances were presented to accommodate the large crowd. In Portland John Backman became ill and was compelled to remain there. He was expected to re-join in Seattle. After leaving Portland the show entered Washington to finish the week at Aberdeen on 26 May. Three more cities in the state preceded the three-day stand in Seattle - 31 May and 1-2 June.

At Everett, Washington, on 29 May the show met with rain and the matinee was poorly attended. However, there was capacity business at night. Mt. Vernon, the next day, brought only fair business. The rain continued during the three-day Seattle stand and business was very poor.

On 2 June *Billboard* carried a long ar-



Al G. Barnes Circus big show band on the lot in 1928. Bandleader Spud Redrick is at the far right, holding the trombone of E.C. Buman, who took the photo.

ticle concerning the circus performance and management. Digested here are some of the statements recorded about the show at this time. "Louis Roth and Captain Jimmy Meyers, with their groups of trained wild animals, have received special mention in the press, as have Capt. Charles and his seals; the Riding Davenports; Klinkhardt's Midgets; the Matlock Family; the Healy's wire act; the Aerial Behees; Marie Gallagher and her polar bears; the Mark Smith Troupe; the Kunze Bros. with the famous riding four; the Liberty horses worked by Mark Smith and Prof. Max Sable; Betty Kenyon's wrestling tiger; and the three herds of performing elephants, under the direction of Billy Mack, Irene Murray, Anna Velde, Rhea Jack, Hazel Prosser and Dixie Whitaker. Two Acts that stopped the show were Babe Letourneau, swinging by her heels from the heights of the big top, and Harry Babetas in his evolutions hanging by his teeth from the top of the big tent. Both worked without protection of a net.

Special attention was called to the wonderful horsemanship of Bertha Conrad, Margaret Graham, Irene Grizzelle, Irene Murray, Rixie Rouedelle, Erna Fowler, Bernice Collins, Pearl Lingo, and Laura Post. Clowns singled out for mention in this article were: Bill Tafe, Jack McAfee, Danny McAvoy, Dutch Marco, Bill Ward, Toby Tyler, and Milt Taylor.

Additional information included concerned Dr. W. L. Stevens who was present to handle all casualties and Austin C. King, who, in addition to his side-show duties, handled the press back with the show. Lew Backenstoe's pit show, which featured the chimpanzee, "Joe Mendi," was also drawing the crowds. Doc Cunningham announced all numbers in the performance.

Advertising Car No. 2 with Frank Bagan and a crew of fifteen men worked the rail routes. Special Agent, Tom J. O'Brien, was in charge of the opposition brigade with a crew of six billers. Thomas (Skinny) Dawson was contracting press agent and traveled fourteen days ahead of the show. Cliff McDougall worked three days ahead and lectured at schools. Al

Priddy, the show's director of public relations, gave talks to Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and other organizations.

The show left Seattle on 2 June and made Yakima, Walla Walla Washington and Moscow, Idaho during the next three days. Business did an up-turn and was very good at these towns. The show continued to have good crowds at Spokane, Washington, Sand Point, Idaho, and Kalispell, Montana. At this last town Al G. Barnes entertained a number of friends in his private car.

The show continued in Montana with a two-day stand at Havre and one day at Great Falls. Again business was excellent. The next date was at Shelby where two extra shows were given. Butte, Livingston, Billings and Miles City (all Montana) followed with two excellent houses in the last city. Patsy Clancy, who had apparently been injured, re-joined at Miles City and Lucille Hawkins joined at Billings as a press agent.

On 16 June *Billboard* predicted a strong opposition battle Illinois during July. Al G. Barnes' Circus was booked for Elgin on 10 July and the Sells-Floto Show was scheduled for Evanston and Elgin at the same time. Two weeks later it was announced that the Barnes' Show had cancelled the date in Elgin.

After concluding the Montana stands

Tom Scaperlanda, well known circus fan, standing by the observation platform of Al G. Barnes private car in San Antonio in 1928. Pasco Scaperlanda photo.



The Barnes band mounted on horses for the spec in 1928. Bandleader Redrick is standing in the center. E. C. Buman photo.

with performances at Glendive on 18 June, the circus went into North Dakota for five dates at Bismarck, Minot, Devils Lake, Grand Forks and Fargo. Then came a week of six Minnesota towns which included two days at Minneapolis. There was ideal weather and very good business during this week. The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus moved into Minneapolis for dates on 25-26 June while the Barnes' Circus appeared in the same city on the 29th and 30th. The Corporation show played St. Paul on the 27th a day before the Barnes' show arrived there. Visits were exchanged and Dan Odom, manager of the Hagenbeck outfit, was the host of Charles Cook on Friday afternoon. Dixie Whitaker, having recovered from her broken collar bone, re-joined the circus at this time and began riding again. The best drawing cards in the menagerie were the Barnes' mastodons, Tusko and Mighty Tusko. The fans of Minnesota flocked to view these huge animals. Frank Backenstoe came on at St. Paul to manage the pit show for his uncle, L. R. Backenstoe. W. L. Backenstoe continued as assistant manager.

The Barnes' Circus jumped from Minneapolis to Omaha, Nebraska, on Sunday, 1 July. After three stands in the state, it went into Colorado and finished the week with two days at Denver. An advertisement in *Billboard* listed Al G. Barnes as



a recent purchaser of a "New Tone" calliope manufactured by the National Calliope Corporation of Kansas City, Missouri.

An illustration with the advertisement depicted the instrument mounted on a truck.

Apparently one reason for the long jump to Omaha was to avoid the Christy Bros. Circus, which was touring the northern territory at this time. The Texas-based show had played some Montana towns several weeks before the Barnes' show arrived in that state—notably Billings, Miles City and Glendive. It had also made some of the same towns in North Dakota that Barnes had on its schedule. The Christy Show remained in Montana and Wyoming during July as Barnes made its Colorado, New Mexico, and Kansas stands.

Before the Barnes' Circus moved to Colorado it made the 4 July date at McCook, Nebraska. It was witnessed by well-known CHS member, Joe Fleming, who fortunately recorded his experiences that day: "A friend and I got on the mid-night train in Trenton and rode the twenty-five miles to McCook, Nebraska, on the morning of July 4, 1928. It was always my policy to be there before a circus got in and, of course, this morning when the Al G. Barnes Circus was scheduled to arrive was no exception. The circus train pulled in shortly after sun-up and it was a beautiful sight with many cages, each of them with a lot of white paint on them.

"Most of the baggage horses were gray, but not all of them. A pull-over team was brown, four red roans pulled the stake driver, and one four-horse team was made up of three grays and a black.

"A pair of elephants was used as a

Interior of the Al. G. Barnes menagerie in 1928. Note group of bison in foreground with line of cages in back. Potter collection.



The flat cars and coaches of the Barnes show parked on the siding of the Baldwin Park winter quarters shortly after the 1928 season. Mathie photo.

'pull-away' team and the handler kept them moving fast. He kept hollering at them to 'move it up' and that night he was so hoarse he could hardly make himself heard when he was doing the 'pull-in' job with them. He called them 'Babe' and 'Jeddy' and I never found a bullman who heard of 'Jeddy,' nor ever saw one listed by that name, so eventually 'Jeddie' must have been his pet name for 'Joskie.'

(Author's note: Fleming's "Jeddie" was obviously "Jenny" who worked with "Babe" as a team on the Barnes' show and Ringling-Barnum for many years. "Josky" did not arrive on the Barnes' Circus until several years later, in January 1933, to be exact, along with four other bulls from the Sells-Floto Circus.)

"The lot in those days was only a few blocks from the runs but it was on top of a pretty good sized hill and they did a lot of hookropeing to get the heavier wagons up the hill. One of the lead horses on an eight-horse team was a snow white, pink skinned beauty called 'Rowdy' and they rested the teams before they got all the way onto the lot, and when they gave the go ahead signal, 'Rowdy' made quite an issue of it before he got down to business. But he always got down to business and did his part.

"After they got the menagerie wagons unloaded they tied zebras to it and there were a dozen or so of these pretty fellows and it made quite a sight with the big red wagon for a background. They also had a couple of Scotch cattle and other lead stock.

"As usual the Barnes' elephants were fat and well kept and the herd included three big males with 'Tusko' towering

above all the others. He was covered with chains and this included a long chain that dragged behind him and back to the single tree of a big female's harness. She walked beside him and was there to stabilize him if he decided to give a problem. This, along with the other elephants, was a very impressive sight.

"The Barnes' show was noted for their good horses and when the ring stock arrived on the lot each horse was wearing a light stable blanket. They were a fine bunch of ring stock, mostly Palominos and speckled Appaloosas, plus some other colors and, of course, the usual gray rosin-backs.

"Of course, by 1928 the street parade had been discontinued and everything was up and ready for the two o'clock matinee, although that day they let us into the menagerie but held us there for awhile, until they finished getting things ready in the big top.

"What a show it was! Spud Rederick was bandleader and it was a mighty fine band but, of course, in those days almost every circus large or small had a good band with the main difference being that the larger shows had more men in their band and most of them had an air calliope playing with the band and that really put the frosting on the cake.

"Barnes had two opening specs that year, one being the traditional with the band marching ahead followed by mounted people, marchers, lead stock and bulls. It was on an Oriental theme and the band played 'In Old Pekin' as it marched. There was a high platform in the center ring and as soon as the spec went out the Klinkhardt's midgets appeared on this platform dressed as toy

A group of cages in the 1928 Barnes menagerie. Note the decorations and show title on cage cover boards in foreground. Potter Collection.





Line of cages in the Al G. Barnes menagerie, season of 1928. Potter collection.

soldiers and did a drill while the band played 'The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers.'

"Then the second spec came in and this time everybody was mounted on a horse and this included the band. Each horse wore a beautifully decorated blanket and every rider wore a beautiful wardrobe. The entire track was filled with horses two abreast.

"Although it was a well-balanced, fast moving performance, the show leaned toward their nice horses. A man announced to be Al G. Barnes in person drove swiftly around the track in a bicycle-wheeled buggy with a matched pair of speckled bay and white Appaloosas that were pacers and these were the only Appaloosas that I ever saw that were pacers, and to those that are not acquainted with such, there is a definite difference in trotters and pacers. This team moved fast and it was an impressive sight. Later, a man introduced as Al G. Barnes himself rode around the track on a fine American-bred saddle stallion, doffing his hat to the crowd as he went by.

"The performance naturally was good and among other acts were the Klink-

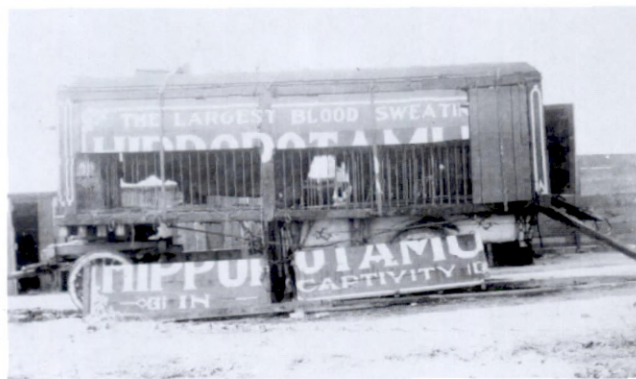
hardt Midgets riding full-sized rosin-backs. However unusual this sort of act was, it was not a great act and those little people performed with mechanics on them which was as it should have been under the circumstances.

"At one point in the program the entire track plus the rings were filled with menage horses while the band played a catchy number called 'The Birds and the Brook' and in unison each horse did the same thing - for example, they all laid down and each lady rider did a few dance steps in time with the band while the horses remained down. Then each horse 'sat up' at which time the lady riders did some more dance steps.

"Two different clown numbers on the track come to mind - both involved a small mule. In one act the clown would stand spread-legged and the mule would run between the clown's legs, and the clown would drop down and ride a short distance, then the mule would stop short and the clown would sail off, run up the track, stop and spread his legs for the mule to run under him again.

"The other act involved a different

Part of the 1928 Barnes elephant herd. At left is Black Diamond, billed as Tusko. On the right in heavy chains is Tusko, billed as the Mighty Tusko. Pfening Archives.



The Barnes hippo, Lotus, in her cage at Baldwin Park, California, winter quarters, October 23, 1928. Pfening Archives.

mule and possibly the same clown or maybe a different one. This man had a slide trombone and he and the mule walked along together, then stopped and the clown played a few loud notes on his trombone and the mule threw his head back and brayed for all he was worth. Then they moved on down the track always stopping and repeating their playing and braying.

"In the many years that I have visited circuses I never saw a serious accident but on this day at Barnes I saw two accidents but neither was serious. One involved a riding act at which time the rosinback was loping around the ring loaded with people standing up on him and he stubbed a toe against the ring curb and fell down and the people all lit off on their feet, as nimble as a cat and the horse got quickly to his feet and started loping again as if nothing had happened and the people ran and jumped on. The other accident could have been serious but wasn't. A man walked from the bandstand to the other side of the backdoor just as three sets of Roman standing riders came dashing out of the tent following their act. They ran over that poor guy but for some reason he was able to get up and go on his merry way, but my guess is that after that he made sure that no one was coming out before he walked across to the backdoor.

"Two rather amusing instances come to mind. When my friend and I left the runs and headed for the lot we passed a hamburger joint and a sign in the window said that they had a special on, 'Hamburgers five cents each,' so we went in and bought three or four of them for each of us as we had not had any breakfast yet. In these inflated times a nickle for a hamburger seems incredible. They were no giants but neither were they chincy. I always wore a cowboy hat and on the way to the lot several small boys overtook us and evidently being a stranger in town plus the big hat gave them the idea that I was a circus man, and they hit me up for a job helping put up the show. I thought it would be real neat to go along with it, so I said, 'sure, you boys can help, just follow us guys,' which they did and when we hit

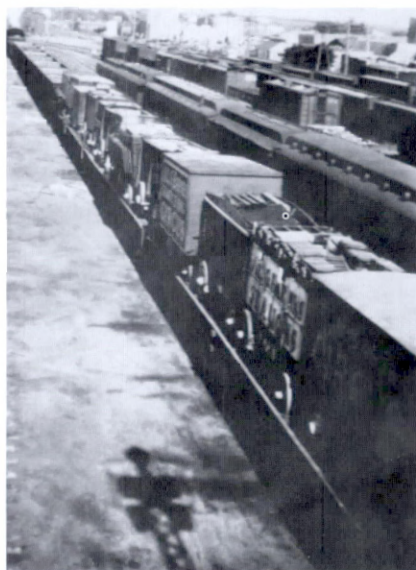
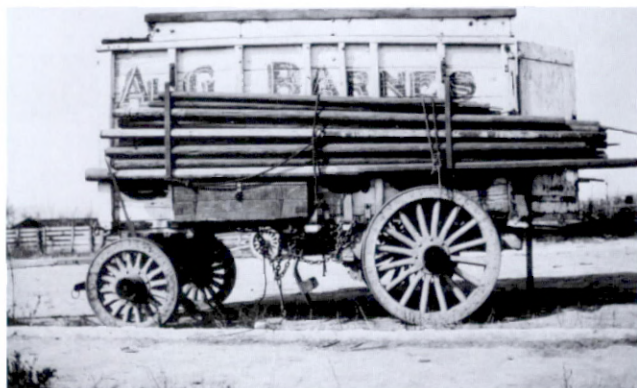
the lot I pointed out the right man and told them to go to him and he would put them to work, which he sure did, too.

"As was customary in those days this circus was heavily billed in outlying towns with huge daubs on barns and such places and lots of beautiful lithos in store windows. This billing included lots of special paper for feature acts which included the spec, Klinkhardt's midgets, and others. In those days McCook drew big crowds from area towns and the many farmers that were there in those days.

"We watched the tear-down that night and the eight-horse team had it easy taking the light plant wagon down the same hill where they had used forty head hook-rope onto the same wagon to move it up the hill that morning. The wagons were headed west when they went up the runs at loading out time and the street where they came up to the runs did not have any room to get the pole wagon turned toward the runs so the driver took this wagon east a block to an intersection where there was not much traffic and U-turns were permitted. At this intersection the driver doubled his eight-horse team sharply around which caused the end of the center poles to make a big, swift arc. A helper had come along and when it was time that the poles were to make their wild circle this man ran ahead of the poles to keep anyone from getting in the way of those pole ends. An eight-horse team plus a long pole wagon, plus the length of the center poles, just about didn't have any room to spare in that intersection, but the driver never looked back to see how things were coming along. I never saw a long-string driver look back at where he had been. He always looked ahead to see where he was going and I never saw a long-string driver misjudge his distance or fail to do what he needed to do. In this case he got his load placed into position so it could go up the runs O.K.

"They loaded the circus train without incident and we boarded our train and arrived in Trenton barely ahead of the Barnes' train. It was a bright moonlit night and we were not far from the tracks

Al G. Barnes cookhouse wagon in the Baldwin Park quarters in October 1928. Pfening Archives.



This McCook, Nebraska, 1928 view shows loaded flats on the left and although not clearly shown are the cars on the adjacent track which are probably the show's coaches. Joe Fleming photo.

when we watched the circus train go by, and as usual it made a big lump in our throats to see it pass by and know that one more happy day on a circus had just ended. The Al G. Barnes' Circus was truly one of the world's best. This had been a super way to celebrate the 4th of July in 1928."

The Barnes' show left Denver on the night of 7 July and made six additional Colorado cities during the next week. The Saturday date was at Trinidad and over Sunday the circus went to Las Vegas, New Mexico. These New Mexico towns followed - Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Vaughn and Clovis. The Saturday stand was at Amarillo, Texas. From that city the show jumped to Wellington, Kansas. It played two more dates in Kansas and finished the week with three Oklahoma towns. During these weeks Mr. and Mrs. William Parks joined the show. He was at the front door while his wife worked in the performance.

The week of 30 July - 4 August was spent in Arkansas with the exception of the Saturday stand at Texarkana, Texas.

Business was good during the week but tragedy struck the night of 3 August when Countess dropped dead in the street while enroute to the train. Countess had been acquired by the Barnes' show in 1923 in a trade for the baby elephant, Venice. The ten remaining elephants on the show in 1928 were: Babe, Ruth, Jewel, Pearl, Jennie, Lois, Palm and the three males - Vance, Black Diamond, and Tusko.

Further news from the show at this time indicated that both business and weather had been good in Oklahoma and Arkansas. Charles T. Bouleware, formerly with the show, entertained Charles C. Cook at Oklahoma City. Bouleware was the distributor for Graham-Paige automobiles in the state. Al G. Barnes returned to the show at Hot Springs after several weeks on a business trip to Los Angeles. Mike Golden, the general agent, visited the show in Texarkana.

At Mount Pleasant, Texas, the opening day of the next week a lion escaped from its cage and caused a bit of excitement. However, Louis Roth and his assistants soon caged the beast. Sherman, Fort Worth, Dallas, Corsicana, and Bryan concluded the week. The famous circus historian, C. G. Sturtevant, visited the show at Dallas and commented, "A fine show was given to big business. The two big bulls, Tusko and Tusko the second, are a wonderful attraction and Charles Redrick's band is a dandy."

Many fine comments were made about the Redrick band during this tour. In addition to its director it contained Mal Puper, Jodie Conway, and Dewey Conway (trumpets), Albert Mitchell, Roy Stone and Ed Bowman (trombones), C. Gaylord, Frank Clark and C. E. McConnell (clarinets), Karl Strum (baritone), "Slick" Slighten (Sousaphone), Harry Woods and George Klaus (alto horns), Harold Ronenbarn and Chuck Roberts (saxophones), Scotty Thomas (bass drum), and "Happy" Ruggles (snare drum) - a total of seventeen members.

The next week opened with stands at Palestine, Jacksonville, and Marshall, Texas, and then the show went into Loui-

Al G. Barnes sea lion cage No. 179 in Baldwin Park quarters in October of 1928. Potter collection.





Big show prop wagon, No. 49, at the Barnes quarters in the fall of 1928. Potter collection.

siana for dates at Shreveport, Alexandria, and Franklin. New Orleans, heavily billed for weeks, came next for three days. This date had been looked forward to in anticipation of great business. However, inclement weather dashed the hopes of the circus management. The opening Sunday matinee was cancelled because of a late arrival and very muddy grounds. The night performance was presented with rubber boots added to the usual circus costumes. The Monday night performance was significant in that Anna Velde returned to her duties in the program. She had been out for several days owing to a deep scalp wound received when one of the bears had decided to behead her. A *Billboard* note stated: "The Barnes' Circus has the honor of being the only organization of its kind appearing in New Orleans that opened backwards. On the arrival of the tents, water on the grounds prevented their erection and workmen were obliged to drain the grounds. Frank Rooney, Harry Payne, and Walter Dupre worked all Sunday night re-arranging the tents. There was so much water near the main entrance that a flap had to be taken in the rear and people admitted there."

After the disappointing New Orleans stand the show made five more Louisiana cities and then returned to Beaumont, Texas, where it played on 27 August. Five additional Texas towns followed. Danny McAvoy was taken to St. Mary's Infirmary in Galveston suffering from typhoid fever and malaria. He was absent from the show for a month.

In Waco, on Monday, 3 September, there was only a fair matinee crowd but good business at night. The big problem of this week and the following in Texas was terrific heat in which the show lost a few ring stock horses and several baggage horses. The two week run took the show from Waco down to the Rio Grande River and then to Lockhart.

Another hot week in Texas followed with the usual pattern of weak matinee crowds and fair attendance in the evening. It was spent in San Antonio, Georgetown, Hillsboro, Waxahachie, Terrell, and Greenville.

Barnes side show canvas and props baggage wagon, No. 72, in quarters in the fall of 1928. Note the entire show was set up in



quarters as a movie set for the motion picture "The Side Show" starring Marie Prevost. Potter collection.

Paris, the opening town of the next to the last week of the tour, was played on 24 September. The show completed the week in Oklahoma. The No. 1 advertising car had already closed and gone to Los Angeles where the crew split up to travel to their various homes. The brigade truck in charge of Frank Godman closed at Wichita Falls, Texas, on 5 October. It was reported that the early closing date was due to a contract with a motion picture company. The film was entitled "The Side-Show" starring Marie Prevost.

During the last week of the 1928 tour the Al G. Barnes' Circus played Perry, Oklahoma, Caldwell, Kansas, El Reno and Waurika, Oklahoma, Wichita Falls, Texas, and closed on 6 October at Vernon, Texas.

The Barnes' Show in 1928 made 191 towns and traveled through seventeen states. The total miles covered was 22,007. The show experienced no serious accidents and lost but three matinees through late arrivals caused by long jumps and getting off bad lots the night before. Business was exceptionally big from the opening day through California and Northwest. However, in the Middle West and South business was spotty. Opposition was experienced from the time the show arrived in North Dakota up to the last week of the season. Earlier opposition had been encountered with the Christy and the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circuses. Late in the season it was Sells-Floto paper and the arrival of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus

in Oklahoma and Texas that caused problems.

During the last week of October Austin C. King resigned in order to devote his attention to sending acts to the Orient from San Francisco. At the end of November a judgement for \$2500 damages was brought against the Al G. Barnes' Circus by the Calgary, Canada, *Herald* because of false advertising submitted to the paper. It was ruled by the court to be an untruthful news article and Barnes had to pay the amount requested plus costs.

The year of 1928 was the last season that Al G. Barnes operated the circus. It was sold during the winter to the American Circus Corporation who operated it during the next season. This sale had been rumored for the past two years and was finally consummated. The famous owner died soon after, at Indio, California, on 25 July 1931.

In conclusion the writer would like to pay tribute to the members of the Al G. Barnes' Circus with whom he became acquainted in the following years. They are: Robert and Ova Thornton, Joe and Anna Velde Metcalf, George Perkins, John T. Backman, Murray Pennock, Jack McAfee, Jake Posey, and Frank and Siva Phillips.

A great deal of credit for assistance with these articles concerning the Al G. Barnes years is due to the unfailing help of Joseph T. Bradbury, Don Francis, and many others who have studied various aspects of the Al G. Barnes Circus.

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MOBY DICK ON RAILS

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

By the end of the 1920s the number of railroad circuses had dwindled considerably, leaving many experienced show people with no place to go. Their salvation came from an entirely new type of show that appeared out of nowhere in 1928. Jobs were at once created for many experienced circus people, especially agents and side show bosses.

A most unusual situation occurred in 1928 when two showmen, totally independent of each other, came up with the same idea. The unique attraction provided dozens of jobs and grossed millions of dollars. The new attraction was, of all things, the display of pickled whales.

Whales had intrigued man for centuries. The giant mammals had supplied the bases for soaps, perfumes and industrial oils, and by the late 1920s the world's largest animal found new importance when its value was extended to show business.

Creatures of the sea, real and fake, had been exhibited in the 19th century by American showmen. The Great International Menagerie, Aquarium, and Circus featured "A Leviathan Whale, a grand and magnificent specimen, the King of the Deep" in its newspaper ads in 1873. The ad read, "Don't forget one great point—That this is the only show in the world that exhibits a WHALE." The Burr Robbins Circus exhibited a paper mache imitation whale a few years later.

Two whale shows played Columbus, Ohio, in 1881, the first arriving from Louisville for a week stand starting March 8. The *Columbus Dispatch* of March 5, 1881, quoted from a Louisville paper, "It requires a great deal of elbow room, because his whale-ship is sixty feet long in the clear, and when he feels pretty well pulls the beam at forty tons, or 80,000 pounds. His mouth is twenty-two feet in the spread, and he is forty-five feet around the girth. He is one of the Greenland family, and was shot about seventy-five miles off Cape Cod, where he had wandered out of his usual path in pursuit of herrings and mackerel. The carcass was then towed into Princeton, Massachusetts. The entrails were removed and the cavity filled with ice. This has preserved the body intact and perfectly. The ice is renewed frequently, and immense layers of blubber are thus prevented from melting. It is, in fact, a successful embalming by the aid of ice, instead of chemicals. The whale is carried from place to place upon two flat cars, which are built into one. The grooms of his bed-chamber are two experienced whaling men, and there is no disagreeable odor attaching to him." A newspaper ad published the day before the arrival of the show stated that the whale would be exhibited at the new whale exposition building from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. each day.

In August a second show arrived in Columbus for a week advertised as "The Monster Whale." The attraction appeared in Columbus, Ohio. The advance newspaper ads for

the whale were different in style but carried much of the same information, suggesting that either the two shows used the same information in their ads, or that the same outfit had returned for a second time. The description of the layout was exactly the same. Three days prior to the engagement an article appeared in a Columbus newspaper that provides a description of the layout. The article read: "Carpenters are at work, on High Street near the depot, building a platform on each side of a railway switch, for convenient exhibition of the whale all next week. The two flat cars supporting the whale will run between these platforms, which are the same height as the floor of the car, the whole making a continuous floor. Connection between the two sides, at the head and the tail

Newspaper ad used by the whale show that played Columbus, Ohio in 1881. John Polacsek collection.

HE IS COMING! HE IS COMING!

THE MONSTER WHALE!

THE MONARCH SUPREME OF THE OCEAN

THE GIANT OF THE GIGANTIC CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE



The Finest, the Only One and Probably the Last you and your Children will See in a Life Time.

LENGTH 60 FEET!

ORIGINAL WEIGHT, 80,000 POUNDS

JUST THINK OF THESE ENORMOUS PROPORTIONS.

Now thoroughly Embalmed or Preserved and presented to the public AT A COST OF EMBALMING OF \$4,500.

Come and see it and bring the children. Do not let this opportunity pass to give them this incomparable, practical and intensely interesting lesson in Natural History.

EXHIBITED TO OVER ONE MILLION PEOPLE!



This Magnificent Specimen of the Wonders of Nature is conceded by the Press of the country, and an appreciative public, to be the most meritorious and most intensely interesting object of curiosity as well as the greatest and practical lesson in Natural History for the Little Folks.

COMMENCING
MONDAY, AUG. 29, 1881,

FOR ONE WEEK ONLY (Fair Week),

ON HIGH STREET, AT ENTRANCE TO TUNNEL,

100 Feet South of Union Depot.

Open from 7 A. M. Until 10 P. M.

Admission 25c Children 10c

DON'T FAIL TO BRING THE CHILDREN!

Dep. d 14

of the whale, will enable the visitor to walk round the two cars. A tent will cover the entire space occupied by the two cars and extensive platform, and saw dust will cover the floor to deaden sound and add to the cleanliness of the place." The whale arrived the morning of the 29th from Dayton and was met by a large crowd. On September 1 another article appeared reading as follows: "It is worth while to see the whale, and hear the process by which it has been preserved for exhibition. In a word, the entrails were removed, and the cavity filled with something of a preservative nature. The whole body of the whale was then impregnated with the material. Iron hoops within keep the body expanded to its full size, so that one gets a better idea of its immensity now than at the preceding exhibition. The place is free from unpleasant odor, the entrance and exit are tidy, and the floor extends all around the whale. Its weight, the time it was caught, and other information is posted on the body." The whale show appeared in Decatur, Illinois, for a week in December of 1881, suggesting that tour went throughout the year.

Hugh Fowzer, an experienced side show man, is generally conceded to be the first to put the specimen on a railroad car and to tour the nation in this century. Fowzer may or may not have known about the prior whale exhibits. Carl Terrell, a motordrome rider, claimed he gave Fowzer the idea for a whale show. Terrell told Fowzer about a marine show he had seen in Omaha around 1921. This show was exhibited on a converted showboat. Hugh Fowzer then teamed with an individual who gained fame wrestling an octopus in marine life shows on the west coast. Fowzer's partner was a one-armed man called Wingy Counts, often called "One-Arm Wingy." Counts had been active in the Venice, California, area and knew the drawing power of marine exhibits. It appears that Counts handled the embalming job on the first Fowzer whale.

Shortly after Fowzer packed his whale on a railroad car and took to the road, a wax museum operator by the name of Harold L. Anfenger noticed the business being done by boatmen off of Long Beach when they brought whales close to shore and displayed them to visitors. The whales did not last long beached, decomposing after a few days. An employee of Anfenger suggested embalming a whale and touring it. Anfenger was impressed with the idea but was reluctant to gamble the \$10,000 that he felt it would cost to do the job. He then came up with the idea of having four investors put up \$2,500 apiece. One of the investors was M. C. Hutton. Hutton became active in the organizing of the attraction. The two ordered a whale from the commander of a whaling ship, who quickly delivered a specimen and collected \$1,500. Anfenger and Hutton had no idea how they were going to preserve the whale. They hired



an embalmer who began pouring formaldehyde and salt into the mammal. The whale promptly exploded. The whaler suggested that they allow him to deliver a second whale and that they place it on a railroad car and take it on the road, smell and all.

Anfenger and Hutton selected a nautical name for their venture. The Pacific Whaling Company started in 1928 and continued until 1940. The Pacific show opened in the fall of 1928 in San Francisco. The whale was mounted on a rail car with collapsible hinged platforms around the sides and ramps at one end. The show grossed around \$100,000 in less than six months. Discovering they had a good thing Anfenger and Hutton began to expand. A second unit was framed and was scheduled to open on Christmas Day in Long Beach. The health department beefed, claiming that the exhibit was unsanitary. Undaunted the two showmen hired a house mover who transferred the flat car from the track to the appointed location. The take for that day alone was about \$1,500. It is estimated that the Pacific operation grossed \$800,000 a year with their first display. Pacific added more units until they had nine. Extending the number of units on the basis of the income from the first the shows must have made millions.

The later units used seventy-two foot rail cars, converting them for show use at a facility near the docks in Long Beach. When the cars rolled off the line the whales were placed on them directly out of the water. The embalming, such as it was, was done at once.

However the problem of dealing with the decaying odor of the whales was never ending. It was soon discovered that it helped to cut out large portions of the mammal's insides and fill the void with wood braces. A smelly oil drained from the carcass requiring a drip pan, which was loaded with rock salt. Daily injections of formaldehyde were used as an effort to contain the odor. The giant tongues were the worst source of foul smell, but the tongues were deemed too important to remove.

A Pacific unit played downtown Chicago in 1930 and drew 250,000 people during the six week stand. Pfening Archives.

By late 1930 the fast expansion of units called for additional staffing. Anfenger and Hutton drew upon the pool of capable showmen who were available due to the removal of the American Circus Corporation shows from the road. Each of the units required a manager, an advance agent and a couple of lecturers, as well as billposters and press agents. Former side show lecturers were dressed in sea captain's uniforms and given fast courses in whaleology. Long time circus side show manager Arthur Hoffman schooled them in ocean vocabulary and transformed them into old salts. Salty looking individuals were pictured in advertising heralds using names like Capt. Mike Doyle and Capt. David Barnett. The former circus hands adapted to the new roles and before long even they thought they had spent years at sea.

One of the Pacific units, billed as "The Big Whale," played in Columbus, Ohio, in June of 1931. The advance press agent conducted a contest to find a name for the whale. Each child who sent in a name received a free tick-

One of the Pacific units is shown here in Peoria, Illinois in 1935. Pfening Archives.



BENEFIT COLUMBUS BABY CAMP
Showing Now and All Week
 In Special Steel R. R. Car, 3rd and Naghten Sts.
 (Near B. & O. Freight Depot Tracks)

The Thrill of a Lifetime!
SEE THIS MONSTER OF THE DEEP
 CAPTURED AFTER 16 HOURS
 OF DEATH-DEFYING COMBAT!
 YOU'LL GAZE IN AWE AND
 WONDER AT THE MIGHTY
 LEVIATHAN OF THE SEAS

**55 FEET LONG
 68 TONS**

THE CAPTIVE WHALE

HEAR CAPTAIN DAVID BARNETT, 68-YEAR-OLD WHALER IN
 PERSON. HE TELLS YOU HOW HE CAUGHT THIS WHALE.
 Showing Day and Night
 Adults 25c
 Children 10c

SPECIAL ADDED ATTRACTION
 The Big Harpoon Gun and the Only Embalmed
 Baby Whale in the World. Mother and
 Baby Whale.

Newspaper ad for the Pacific Whaling Co. in Columbus, Ohio in June 1931. John Polacsek collection.

et. A local boy received the \$10 cash award after submitting the name "Neptune, Jr." The whale was no doubt renamed in each city along the route. When the show arrived in Columbus from the prior stand in Akron it was discovered that nine year old Ward Setzer had also made the trip to Columbus. The youngster's parents had gone to California a week before, and when young Ward learned that the captive whale was leaving Akron he assumed that it was being taken back to California, where it was captured by the Pacific Whaling Co. He had climbed into the whale's mouth in Akron and discovered, when he awoke the next morning, that he was in Columbus, not California. The *Columbus Dispatch* carried a three column photo of Ward standing on the whale. If the story was a press agent's hoax it was pulled off well.

Soon additional ways were found to get money from the customers: a perfume pitch was given, which after all were not much different than the candy and peanut pitches that were part of their former employment. Although the whale was the feature, other attractions were added such as a headless woman illusion, a mermaid and a flea circus.

The show was usually located on a side



track near the depot in a city, but when more centrally located lots were available the car would be moved off track to an uptown parking lot. The use of house movers was expensive but the better location more than paid for itself. On rare occasions special temporary rail tracks were installed to move the car off line.

Meanwhile Fowzer and Counts, whose show used a shorter rail car, had added a unit; their two and Pacific's nine blanketed the country with whale shows. The competition was keen and there were numerous day and date engagements. A whale show was a whale show and one company would often change its route to jump in ahead of the competitor, capitalizing on the other's advance advertising. This happened in St. Louis after Anfenger had billed the surrounding territory heavily. When the Pacific unit arrived in St. Louis it found Wingy Counts' exhibit already in place. This was the final straw. Pacific bought Counts out and stopped the expensive practice. Pacific retaliated further by getting the whaling companies to sell exclusively to them. Fowzer was soon out of business.

A Pacific Whaling Company four page newspaper size herald used in 1934 was titled the "Marine Review." A copy for a one day stand in Kirksville, Indiana, on June 7 contained short articles with headings like, "Bowhead Whale Near Extinction," "Sperm Whale Has Big Head," "Japanese Eat Whale Tongue" and "Giant Octopus Now Being Exhibited At Big Whale Show." On page two was an article titled, "Hollywood Stars In Person With Flea Circus."

In 1936 the herald used by Anfenger and Hutton was titled "Pictorial Pre-view." That year in addition to the whale the show advertised a flea circus, a giant Texas Longhorn, a midget donkey, a giant St. Bernard dog, a group of penguins and a 3000 year old mummy.

In 1937 the show was called "Modern Noah's Ark." An eight page tabloid size herald was used that season. New attractions were a living two headed cow and a female mentalist "who will guess your age."

Another 1937 Pacific unit issued a herald called the "Marine Journal." It told of such attractions as Roy Bard, a living petrified man, a giant octopus and a flea circus. A

In the mid 1930s trucks with search lights were added to the Pacific Whaling Co. units. Pfening Archives.

WILL EXHIBIT AT

WAUPACA

--ONE DAY ONLY--

MONDAY, JULY 19

ON WORLD'S LARGEST RAILROAD CAR

AT GREEN BAY & WESTERN DEPOT

MAMMOTH MARINE HIPPODROME
and
Congress of Unbelievable Biological Exhibitions

THE GREATEST EDUCATIONAL EXHIBIT OF ALL TIME!

SEE ROY BARD, THE OSSIFIED BOY
GIANT OCTOPUS
KA-WA-BA AND BABY CHIMPANZEE

Exhibit Open Noon Till 11 P. M. 1937

Admission to Each Attraction **10c**

1937 newspaper ad identified the show as the "Mammoth Marine Hippodrome and Congress of Unbelievable Biological Exhibitions," appearing on the world's largest railroad car. Admission was 10 cents for each attraction, indicating that one charge did not allow you to see it all.

In May of 1938 the Mammoth Exposition Train, a Pacific unit, played just north of the Union Depot in Columbus, Ohio. In addition to the rail car a truck was carried equipped with giant search lights. The show was advertised in the local papers and the city was covered by the distribution of a four page circus style newspaper herald. Attractions listed in the herald included a mermaid, a giant horse, a headless woman, a midget cow, a shepherd from Galilee, a flea circus, mummies from the "Crypts of Egypt" and of all things a unicorn.

By 1938 Anfenger and Hutton were down to three units. It seems that the crowds were enormous the first time around but after seeing and smelling the whale once it was enough. Pacific was now featuring their museum type curiosities. A Pacific ad appeared in a 1938 *Billboard* wanting comedy side show attractions, a Punch and Judy and magic act, a lecturer, an electrician and a banner man.

The herald used by Pacific in 1939 was called "The Exposition World-News." Trading on the New York World's Fair that year the headline read, "World's Fair Show Train Coming." Attractions included Sontata, the headless girl, the shepherd from the Holy Land, King Konga the giant living ape, a live unicorn and the world's smallest cow. The show appeared in Columbus, Ohio, for the last time in 1939.

By the late 1930s whale shows had seen their day. Small time operators were showing whales on trucks. Ringling agent Arthur Hopper had a baby whale on a semi-trailer, according to Bill Woodcock. Bill Barie also had a small whale show in the 1930s. Some were exhibiting paper mache fabrications. A slick whale show was presented at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. This was a

Special rail tracks were laid to move the whale cars to downtown locations in large cities like Chicago. This rare photo shows a double-length closed whale car. Pfening Archives.



THE ARK REVIEW

STAR SPANGLED BANNER OF A NEW AMERICAN INSTITUTION

MODERN NOAH'S ARK At ST. JOSEPH

**Two Days
SATURDAY-SUNDAY
JULY 10 & 11
OPEN DAILY NOON TO 11 P.M.**

Ten's and ARK Located at
Silver Beach on Ocean Front
Plenty of FREE PARKING SPACE



A captive beluga whale is but one feature of the Marine Life with Modern Noah's Ark.

THE LARGEST HORSE IN THE WORLD



WORLD'S LARGEST COW

**\$100,000
MARINE LIFE
EXHIBIT TO BE
PRESENTED
HERE**

U. S. Marine League
Lenses Mammouth
Spectacle

ORIGINAL NOAH TOOK TWO; MODERN
NOAH HAS EXCEPTIONAL ONE
Educational Exhibit Series Here as
New High in Wholesome Recreation
Presents Nature's Outstanding Personalities of Animal and Deep Sea Life



A two car walk through show titled
World's Fair on Wheels appeared in Jean-
rette, Pa. in 1941. Pfening Archives.

Seattle Whaling Company and Mammouth
Exposition Train.

A short article in the January 6, 1940 *Billboard* stated that the Mammouth Exposition Train had closed on December 9 after opening on February 11, 1939, covering 17,000 miles, playing 231 cities in 17 states. In March of 1940 the whale show was in Florida and was still managed by Harold L. Anfenger. But soon after Anfenger had had enough and sold his interest in the Pacific operation to Hutton. A two car outfit called "World's Fair on Wheels," appeared in Jeanerette, Pennsylvania, in 1941. This was most likely the last of the Pacific rail units.

As Hutton continued to cut back, he left units around the country, creating problems in disposing of the whales. He abandoned cars in Houston, Texas and Natchez, Mississippi, among other location, during the early 1940s. Two Hutton cars, whale and all,

were purchased by Martin Arthur in January of 1945 for his new Arthur Bros. rail show. Arthur dumped the whales and cut the cars down and used them as flat cars.

Anfenger got back in the business around 1940, reviving "Modern Noah's Ark" title. The "Ark" consisted of a number of trucks that were dove-tailed together surrounded by a green tent with a frame all around making the set up look like a seafaring vessel. Opposite the "Ark" was an animal arena featuring many of the freak animals that had appeared with the whale show. Arthur Hoffman was manager of this show. The show used an advance car with ten men and a brigade. This final effort probably lasted only one year. Anfenger and Hutton retired and the saga of the pickled whale shows was concluded. Many of the former circus people returned to the white tops without missing a season.

Whale show expert Tom Parkinson provided extensive information for this article. Other information came from John Polacsek, the Circus World Museum and the Pfening archives.

The front page of a 1937 courier tells of the various attractions on a Pacific show. Pfening Archives.

pasteboard version with a front built like the prow of a ship.

In October of 1938 the No. 1 Pacific unit was managed by Macon E. Willis, was in Washington, the No. 2 unit managed by Harold Anfenger was in California and the No. 3 show managed by H. L. Ingraham was in Texas. Hutton handled the advance and routing while Anfenger was in charge of the production end of the operation. The shows were called Mammouth Marine Hippodrome,

Newspaper ad used by the Mammouth Exposition Train in 1940 does not mention a whale. Pfening Archives.

MAMMOTH EXPOSITION TRAIN

LEAS CHURCHES
Wed. Nov 13th
On Tracks at
Santa Fe Depot

KIDDIES
ALWAYS
5¢
ADULTS
15¢

AN UNPARALLELED EXHIBITION OF
STRANGE LIVING ANIMALS
and EXOTIC HUMANS! • SHOWN ON BOARD
from the ENDS of the EARTH • SPECIAL
Railroad Cars!

SPECIAL STAR
*****FEATURE*****
SHOWN ON BOTH WORLD'S FAIR!
NOW EXPOSED at Last! the HINDU'S
Secret Laid Bare.
THE LIVING HEADLESS GIRL
LEARN HOW THIS MYSTERY IS ACHIEVED - SEE IT DONE!

ADDED FEATURE!!!
JOE COGOZZO
— In Person —
The Famed Trainer and
His Astounding Educated
Monkeys!!!

WORLD'S LARGEST
Open Air Free LIVING ANIMALS

101 LIVING CURIOSITIES
★ WORLD'S LARGEST STEER!
★ WORLD'S SMALLEST MOLE!
★ ASIATIC BULL-GIF HORNS!
★ FAMOUS WOODMAN STARS
★ WOLLE & ANVIL
★ WORLD'S LARGEST DOG-ALIVE!
★ CAMEL, ELEPHANT, ZEBRA, OSTRICH,
BUFFALO, ZEBRA, HARBOR SEAL, RARE MONKEYS, MANY OTHERS ALIVE!

WORLD'S LARGEST
LIVING HORSE
★ BELGIAN BOB
★ WEIGH
OVER 2700
POUNDS
★ 58 IN. TALL

MANAGERIE OF CURIOUS

CIRCUS EXPRESS '87



WAIT!

The Best 2 Week Circus
Tour to Europe Will Begin

**SEPT 3
10 CIRCUSES!**

For Information Contact



Bill Whitney
Travel Service, Inc.
2 Bow Street
Cambridge, Mass 02138

800-523-2366

Within Mass. 617-864-3600

THE ONLY CIRCUS OKAPIS

by Richard J. Reynolds, III

An abridged edition of this paper was presented at the 1986 Circus Historical Society convention.

By 1900, the modern age was at hand. Homes were illuminated by electricity and connected by telephones. The automobile was here and motion pictures were already impacting the entertainment business. Circuses were at the zenith of their Golden Age. Their menageries had already exhibited most of the world's more imposing land mammals. Though several notable rarities, like the gorilla, were yet to appear with circuses, they were nevertheless well known to naturalists. Even the mysterious giant panda, which would not appear anywhere in captivity until 1936, had been identified from skins and skulls obtained from China in the mid-nineteenth century. Given the scientific precociousness of the era, esteemed naturalists and explorers had long since solemnly pronounced that there were no more major undiscovered mammals, particularly not one as large as a horse.¹ They were in for a shocking surprise, for the Congo rain forest still held a spectacular secret. That was the okapi, the subject of this theme.

The okapi is the giraffe's only living relative but is much smaller. Adults stand five feet at the shoulder, measure six to seven feet from nose to tail, weigh 400 to 500 pounds, and have giraffe-like horns.² Okapis are exquisitely beautiful. The top of the head, ears, neck, and body are velvety chestnut which in some individuals looks almost purplish-black. In stark contrast, the face is pale, looking as though the animal is wearing a mask. The lower legs are mostly white with the upper parts distinguished by an intricate pattern of thin, wavering white stripes on a chestnut background, particularly pronounced on the flanks and buttocks. Though conspicuous in the open, the color scheme is perfect camouflage for the gloom and shadow of the rain forest's floor. This might explain, at least in part, how this large animal managed to escape scientific detection for so long.

Credit for discovery of the okapi goes to Sir Harry Johnston, a British colonial officer stationed in Uganda at the turn of the century. The story actually begins somewhat earlier, however, and involves no less a personality than Henry Stanley, the British born American journalist turned African explorer, famed for his long search for Dr. Livingston. Stanley's 1890 book, *In Darkest Africa*, makes vague reference to an animal the pygmies called "Atti," which Stanley thought to be some sort of forest dwelling donkey. Johnston was intrigued by this description, particularly since horses (including



"Congo," America's first okapi at Bronx Zoo shortly after his arrival in August, 1937. c. New York Zoological Society Photo.

zebras) were not known to frequent dense forests, preferring open plains instead. The place where Stanley said the "atti" lived was in the Congo rain forest, not far to the west of Sir Harry's Uganda post. So, the British officer took the occasion of a

Early 1920s Barnes ads like this claimed as an okapi an animal that in truth was nothing but a donkey-zebra hybrid. Joe Bradbury collection.

AL G. BARNES' BIG 4
WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS
RING

EVERY ACT AN ANIMAL ACT—EVERY ANIMAL AN ACTOR

30 AL G. BARNES' \$50,000 CHALLENGE GROUP
LIONS IN ONE BIG ACT 30
"THE ONLY REAL WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS ON EARTH"

Performing Lions, Tigers, Leopards, Jaguars, Pumas, Raccoons, Shrikes, Grackles and Pile Bears, Elephants, Camels, Zebras, Llamas, Yaks, Zebras, Zebras, Clydesdales, Dogs, Monkeys.

20 The Most Amazing Animal Act Ever!
Performing in the Ring the Tigris including KAHN, \$10,000 Wrestling Tiger 20

LOTUS SEE OKAPI
THE ONLY OKAPI IN CAPTIVITY

40 AN EQUESTRIAN ACT SUPREME 40
DANCING HORSES—DANCING GIRLS

THE ONLY EDUCATED ZEBRA IN THE WORLD SEE THE AWKWARD LION SAMSON

MR. BARNES OFFERS AS AN ATTRACTION FOR THE SEASON A MOST NOVEL, STUNNING AND GUTTERBALLY COMEDY TRAPPEL OF 10 LIONEL PAGEANTY

THE FAIRYLAND FANTASY
HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE
HUNDREDS OF HORSES
COUNTLESS ANIMALS

ALICE IN JUNGLELAND

DOORS 6:30 1 and 8 P.M. PERFORMANCES 7 and 8 P.M. STREET PARADE 10:30 A.M. Daily

visit to the neighboring Belgian colony to make inquiries. He learned to his surprise that natives, as well as local colonial officials, were very familiar with an animal they called "O-api," the pronunciation being somewhat like the "atti" of Stanley's book.³ From all that appears, the few Europeans in the area assumed, albeit erroneously, that the beast was known to science as well.

During 1900, Johnston obtained two strips of skin said to have been taken from one of these forest dwelling animals. Noticing their peculiar striping and color, the persistent Englishman dispatched them to the Zoological Society of London, suggesting that if they were from a zebra, it was certainly not any of the known types. The Zoological Society was impressed and, based on the two skin pieces, provisionally identified the animal as a previously unknown type of zebra. But, the big shock came the next year when the British Museum received from Sir Harry a complete skin and two skulls. Expert analysis of the latter settled it. The animal was not a member of the horse tribe at all but a totally new critter whose nearest relative was the giraffe. On November 19, 1901 this "new" animal was officially assigned its formal Latin label "Okapia johnstoni," the first name from the native dialect and the last for Sir Harry.⁴

The okapi's habitat was thought to be very limited, consisting of a narrow strip, perhaps 700 miles long east to west and 140 miles wide north to south. This narrow band lies north of the mighty Congo River in the heart of the jungle, including the dense Ituri rain forest. Efforts to obtain living okapis were soon underway. A collecting expedition to the Congo, sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History and lasting from 1909 to 1915, actually succeeded in obtaining a newborn example which it hoped to send to the Bronx Zoo in New York. Alas, the captors were ill equipped for its care, and it died after only a few days. However, the expedition did return with some delightful photographs of the beautiful baby, which must have excited those in the animal trade.⁵

In 1915, just as the American expedition was heading home, another calf was captured and brought to the Belgian colonial outpost at Buta, northwest of Stanleyville. This youngster was placed in the care of the residing commissioner's wife. She raised it on the bottle, and it became the village pet, wandering about at will, even foraging on its own in the surrounding jungle. This animal was kept with a view toward sending it home to Belgium and permanent residence in the Antwerp Zoo. However, World War I then held Europe in

turmoil, and the western world would have to await its termination before seeing a living okapi. In due course, however, the good lady of Buta did ship her charge to Belgium. The now fully grown okapi arrived at the Antwerp Zoo on August 9, 1919, the first specimen ever seen alive outside its native haunts.⁶

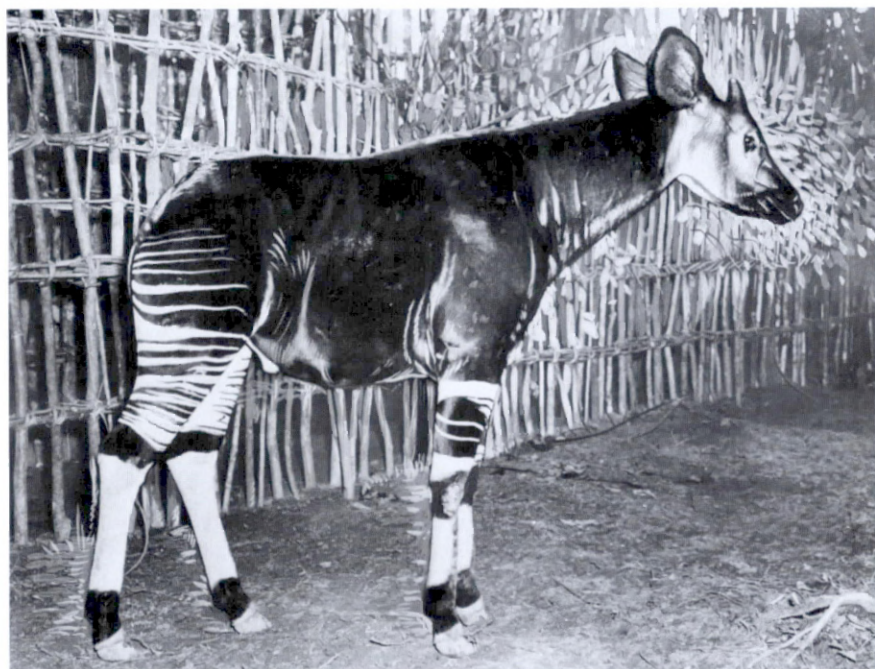
Unfortunately, the first zoo okapi was not seen by many, for it lived less than two months.⁷ Okapis are prone to severe infestation by intestinal parasites which proliferate when the animals are confined in shipping crates during long ocean voyages. This problem caused the early deaths of several of the first examples to arrive in Europe.⁸

Nine years were to pass before the next okapis came out of Africa. This time, 1928, there were two of them. One, a male, was supposed to go to the London Zoo but never got there, dying after only 13 days in Antwerp quarantine. The other, a female, went into the Antwerp Zoo and was the first to be successfully maintained. She lived there 15 years.⁹

The pace of importation now picked up, but the animals did not survive. Males arrived in Antwerp in 1931, 1932, and 1935 but were short lived, dying either in quarantine or after a short time at the Antwerp Zoo. The London Zoo finally got an okapi, a male in 1935, but it too succumbed in short order from problems caused by heavy parasite infection.¹⁰ Then on July 20, 1937, the *S.S. Thysville* arrived at the port of Antwerp from the Congo bringing a shipment of three okapis.¹¹ These, like most others from the pre-war years were obtained from Brother Joseph Hutsebaut of the Premonstration Order, which operated a Roman Catholic mission in the village of Buta. Brother Joseph was an accomplished naturalist to whom came such okapis as were captured in the neighboring jungle.¹²

Of the okapis in the 1937 shipment, two were for European zoos (again London and Antwerp) but the third would become the very first example ever seen alive in America. This animal, a beautiful male appropriately named "Congo," arrived at the New York Zoological Park (Bronx Zoo) on August 2, 1937. Typical of the species, he proved to be docile and gentle. Unlike some of the others, however, "Congo" was very healthy.¹³ This was fortunate, for he was America's only okapi until well after World War II.

Your writer saw "Congo" in New York in August, 1947. At that time, the Bronx Zoo had on display an impressive array of great rarities, including gorillas, giant panda, snow leopard, Indian rhino, bongo antelope, and platypus. None impressed me more, however, than the beautiful, velvety "Congo." Knowing he was America's only okapi, he was at the top of my "must see" list. But, I almost missed him. The day we were there he was inside the antelope house, and the building had a "Closed" sign posted. Luckily, the door was not locked, and I with my family slipped quickly inside. There he was, facing us, standing motionless in his stall, head



"Aribi" (also spelled "Arabi") Ringling-Barnum's male okapi at Epulu, Belgian Congo. Photo probably taken in late 1954. Richard Reynolds collection.

extended, dreamy liquid eyes watching the strangers he knew should not be there. What a thrill it was to see an animal that had not even been discovered 50 years earlier!

Europe torn by World War II and its aftermath meant that no okapis left the Belgian Congo between 1939 and 1948 save an ill-fated animal that died en route to America in 1941. During this time, however, twenty okapis were captured and lived, for varying periods, at zoos in Stanleyville (Kisangani) or Leopoldville (Kinshasa) without ever being exported.¹⁴ With the western world finally recovering from the war, and improvements being made in the care and transportation of animals, okapis would again be leaving the Congo, this time in ever increasing numbers. The Belgian government decided to improve the knowledge of these animals, studying their ecology and biological requirements, breeding them, and controlling their capture and export. So, in 1946, an acclimatization station was installed at Epulu, in the Ituri forest northeast of Stanleyville. Between the end of the war and 1958 more than 100 okapis were captured, evidence that the animal was, at least in those days, fairly plentiful despite its very restricted range.¹⁵ And, now to the circus okapis.

During 1954, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus decided that for the following season it would improve and enlarge its menagerie. Beginning with 1951 the big show had done away with the separate menagerie tent. Instead, the animal display had been crowded into one end of the big top.¹⁶ This arrangement had not proven satisfactory. The sounds of the ani-

mals and the tearing down operations (during a final evening show) were distracting to patrons.¹⁷ It was decided that for 1955 they would go back to the separate menagerie tent per the tradition of 1950 and earlier years.

The size of the traveling elephant herd was increased from 27 in 1954 to 52 in 1955, including the purchase of a small male African elephant who would grow into the mighty "Diamond," rivaling "Jumbo" in size and siring the first African elephant calves ever born in the new world (at the Knoxville Zoo). A new Nile hippo was obtained as were pairs of African black rhinos and Grevy zebras. All of these toured in 1955 except the zebras which were not delivered until the show returned to quarters and had to await 1956 before going on the road.¹⁸

To obtain new attractions for the 1955 show, Henry Ringling North dispatched his agent, McCormick Porter Steele, to Africa.¹⁹ He was to bring back the biggest male forest elephant he could locate, to secure a group of native tribesmen, apparently for an ethnological exhibit,²⁰ to purchase some rhinos and hippos, and of significance to this paper, to obtain for the Ringling-Barnum menagerie none other than the rare okapi.²¹

Steele departed for Africa in early summer 1954. Scouting about, he located several big forest elephants but could never secure one of them.²² Trying for both big-lipped Ubangis and Ituri pygmies, he failed there too, which may have been just as well given the emerging social consciousness of the mid-1950s.²³ However, he succeeded in obtaining the rhinos and a hippo. And, he got the okapi.²⁴ Steele went to Epulu in the Ituri forest and was received by the Captain Jean de Medina, manager of the now famed okapi station. Arrangements were made, and Steele purchased for the circus a four year old male

that had been captured on March 31, 1954 and was named "Aribi," also spelled "Arabi."²⁵ The Greatest Show On Earth was now the owner of probably the rarest animal in its history. At that time, there was but one other okapi in America, the Bronx Zoo's second specimen.²⁶

The Ringling okapi was flown by Sabena Belgian World Airlines direct from Stanleyville in the Congo to Europe and quarantine in Hamburg. From there it was flown to America²⁷ and a second stage of quarantine at the U.S. Dept of Agriculture's station at Clifton, New Jersey.²⁸ It was there that problems arose. But, let me divert for a moment.

During the winter of 1954-55, *Billboard* was full of news about Ringling-Barnum's coming okapi.²⁹ By the spring of 1955, your writer was regularly visiting a retired trouper living in Atlanta named E. W. Adams. "Old Man Adams," as fellow circus historian Joe Bradbury and I called him, lived in a small house on the back of a homeowner's lot. There he stayed amid relics of circuses long gone, among which was an unbelievable collection of newspaper ads and clippings. I was the neophyte, he the veteran. I was naturally excited about the prospect of the okapi for Ringling-Barnum's 1955 menagerie. I told the old man what a novel attraction it would be. He was not impressed. Pronouncing the animal's name "Oh-key-pie," he stated: "That ain't nothing new, Al G. Barnes had an Oh-key-pie in the 1920s." I begged to differ. Adams wheeled and went to one of his old trunks, lifted the lid, thrashed around, and produced an ad for the '23 Barnes show which, sure enough, claimed "The Only Living Okapi In Captivity" with a reasonable drawing of the beast [see accompanying illustration].³⁰ I just knew that could not be correct. A living okapi in America in 1923 would have

been far more celebrated than an obscure clipping in Adams' old trunk.

Joe Bradbury became interested. He consulted the expert, the late Col. William Woodcock, Sr., who probably knew more about circus animals of the 1920s than anyone. Bradbury's question, "Did Al G. Barnes have an okapi in the 1920s?" brought a humorous response. The Colonel said that Barnes no more had an okapi than did the early 1920s Christy Bros. Circus have a "Baby Pterodactyl," which a painting on the cover boards of one of its cage wagons proclaimed. The Colonel sardonically remarked that the famous flying reptile had been extinct for millions of years.

News of the arrival in Antwerp of the first living okapi was widely reported. This no doubt caught Al G. Barnes' eye. Ever alert for new animal features, Barnes obtained, in February, 1920, a donkey-zebra hybrid which he decided to exhibit as an okapi. The faint body stripes of the hybrid lent a modicum of authenticity to the claim. After all, had not the experts first thought the okapi to be a forest dwelling zebra?³¹ The Barnes Circus continued to advertise the "okapi" for several seasons.³² It was not the real thing. The first circus okapi was "Aribi" sent out of the Belgian Congo for the Ringling Show in 1955.

On February 27, 1955 New Yorkers opened their Sunday *Times* to find a half page ad proclaiming the forthcoming March 30th opening of the Greatest Show On Earth in Madison Square Garden. Featured and pictured was "... the rare African OKAPI strange blend of giraffe and zebra never before taken on tour." A

Unidentified man (Howrad Y. Bary?) and okapi in corral at the Epulu Station, Circus Gallery, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.



similar ad appeared the following Sunday, and the March 5th *Billboard* said the animal was expected to arrive in America shortly.³³ At that time, your writer was concluding the winter quarter at Emory University and was looking forward to "spring break" in Bradenton, Florida and the nearby circus winter quarters. I had seen both the *Times* ad and *Billboard* announcement and hoped I might see the okapi in Florida, though I suspected it would not be received until the circus got to New York for the Garden date. I visited the winter quarters on March 13th. The okapi was not there, and none of the show folks I talked to seemed to know much about it, except that it was supposed to eventually join the show. I remember wondering how the rarity would be transported and exhibited. The giraffe wagon method comes to mind, but I cannot now say whether that was my own notion or whether I picked it up from a circus employee in Sarasota. *Billboard* for March 12, 1955 said that a cage for the okapi would be one of four new ones in the menagerie, but I saw no evidence of it at the winter quarters.

Despite the uncertainty sensed in Sarasota, Ringling-Barnum's press department was counting on the okapi. It was emphasized by the above mentioned New York ads, and the 1955 program was already at the printer featuring "African Jungle Freak," a story by McCormick Steele about "Aribi," the Ringling okapi.³⁴ Alas, those looking for it in the menagerie would not find it, not at the New York stand nor anywhere else, for applicable law and regulations prevented its being transported by the circus.

As a cloven hoofed ruminant (giraffe, camel, deer, cattle, goat, sheep, and antelope families) the okapi could transmit hoof and mouth disease and rinderpest. Federal law and Department of Agriculture regulations prohibit the importation of such animals except under strict conditions involving extensive quarantine, after which they can be released only to permanent facilities that pass rigid tests.³⁵ Well managed zoos could qualify but not a traveling exhibit like a circus. This is still the case. Ringling-Barnum tried mightily to obtain a certificate for the release of its okapi, and the 1955 route book even held out hope for "next year."³⁶ However, the Agriculture Department would not budge.³⁷

Henry Ringling North was a friend of Robert Bean, Director of Chicago's Brookfield Zoo. It was qualified to receive and exhibit imported wild ruminants. When it became obvious that the circus could not exhibit "Aribi" in 1955, North arranged to loan him indefinitely to the Brookfield Zoo.³⁸ The okapi arrived there on August 13, 1955.³⁹

Having obtained "Aribi," the Brookfield Zoo looked for a mate. On November 2, 1956 they got a female named "Museka."⁴⁰ Ralph Graham, the Assistant Director at Brookfield, told your writer that an agreement was reached whereby "Aribi" would

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Ringling's okapi was featured in the lead-off ad for the 1955 New York date. Richard Reynolds collection.

continue to stay at the zoo and the first offspring of "Aribi" and "Museka," if any, would go to the circus. This would be possible because the prohibition against a circus' having cloven-hoofed ruminants applies, then as now, *only to imported animals*. Those born here can go to circuses. That is how they now exhibit giraffes, camels, and llamas. While all this was transpiring, the Ringling-Barnum show discontinued its traveling animal exhibit. Hence, whatever happened, it was no longer possible for an okapi to be a Ringling menagerie feature in the traditional sense.

The first okapi bred and born in captivity came into the world on April 19, 1941 at the Stanleyville Zoo, Belgian Congo, but it lived only four and a half months.⁴¹ The western world was then preoccupied with the great war, and this blessed event, significant though it was, went largely unnoticed. The keeping of healthy, compatible pairs of okapis in the west did not commence until after the war, but by the mid-1950s it was apparent that the okapis would soon be established as breeding zoo animals. A female impregnated at the Antwerp Zoo had produced a premature fetus in January 1953. A second calf was born to the same female in 1954, but she unfortunately trampled the youngster to death. The same thing happened again in 1956. Finally, on June 6, 1957, the first okapi to be bred and successfully reared in a zoo came into the

Ringling's "Aribi" at U.S.D.A. quarantine station, Clifton, New Jersey, summer 1955. Reprinted from the *Saturday Evening Post*, c. 1955, The Curtis Publishing Co.



world at the Parc Zoologique du Bois de Vincennes, Paris.⁴² Back at Brookfield, Ringling's "Aribi" was introduced to "Museka." After a number of matings, the female was impregnated and following a gestation period of approximately 13 months, gave birth to a healthy male, on September 17, 1959, the first such blessed event in America. The youngster was given the name "Mister I" (later changed to "Mister G").⁴³ On March 1, 1960, your writer made his first visit ever to the Brookfield Zoo. The ground was covered with snow and visitors were almost nonexistent. In the giraffe house I was able to gaze upon the happy family, featuring the only circus-owned okapis.

Ringling-Barnum was, by 1960, exhibiting a menagerie only at Madison Square Garden during the long New York engagement. They decided they wanted the baby okapi in New York. On March 28, 1960 "Mister G" left the zoo for the circus.⁴⁴ Ringling-Barnum vet Dr. William Y. Higgins was then in charge of its animals. He told your author (in litt), that the okapi was flown from Chicago to New York accompanied by Zoo Director Bean and several attendants. The animal was exhibited in a corral erected on the floor of the exhibit area.⁴⁵ Dr. Higgins said that for a while there was no proper identification on the pen. Then, Jimmy Ringling had an adequate sign painted. Dr. Higgins was very concerned about crating the okapi for shipment at the end of the New York date. He was afraid something would go wrong in all the excitement. However, the youngster walked into its box with no trouble at all. A trucking concern picked up the okapi and took it to its next location.⁴⁶

At the end of the 1960 Garden date, the Ringling menagerie animals did not go back to the Pawtucket, Rhode Island Zoo where they had previously been loaned.⁴⁷ Instead, they seem to have been sent to Bob Dietch's Kiddie Zoo at Fair Lawn, New Jersey.⁴⁸ Whether the okapi went there directly following the New York date is unknown to me because later in the summer "Mister G," together with two Ringling-Barnum giraffes and the hippo "Chester," turned up on loan at Zoorama, a tourist attraction at New Market, Virginia, operated by Rider Animal Co.⁴⁹ This zoo was in the Shenandoah Valley near Luray Caverns. Circus historian Don Francis told me that he visited it in September, 1960 and saw the Ringling okapi.

Zoorama appears to have been open only during the summer season, and for the winter of 1960-61, the okapi and giraffes were sent to Dietch's zoo in Fair Lawn.

During the spring of 1961, the okapi made its second appearance with the big show's Madison Square Garden menagerie, at the conclusion of which it went back again to Dietch's place.⁵⁰ William Elbirt then visited Fair Lawn and took the picture shown here.⁵¹ Whether it spent part of that summer in Virginia your writer cannot say, although the proprietor of Zoorama, Mr. Rider, said (in litt), that he had the okapi for "two seasons." Be that it may, however, it was with Dietch for the winter of 1961-62.

In a 1967 conversation with your writer, Mr. Dietch said that he brought "Mister G" to Madison Square Garden for Ringling-Barnum's 1962 spring engagement. There was a long delay in unloading the animal. This concerned Mr. Dietch as the okapi was becoming highly agitated. When the okapi finally stepped from the crate, it dropped dead. On April 3, 1962, its remains were delivered to the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, and assigned catalogue no. 188304.⁵² "Mister G's" demise closed the book on the exhibition of okapis by circuses.⁵³ But, the story does not end here.

Ringling-Barnum still owned "Aribi." When Robert Bean retired as Brookfield Zoo Director, Henry Ringling North had the animal sent to Busch Gardens at Tampa, Florida.⁵⁴ That was in April, 1966, and "Aribi" then became a feature of the popular Florida attraction, though still owned by the circus.⁵⁵ Finally, in August, 1974, C. P. Fox, who was then working for the Ringling organization, arranged a trade under which Busch Gardens got title to the old okapi; and the circus got a young giraffe that had been born at the beer garden.⁵⁶ "Aribi" lived at Busch until his death on August 17, 1978, setting a near record captive life for the species of 24 years, 4 months, and 18 days.⁵⁷

Will there be more circus okapis? Not likely! The Belgian government withdrew from the Congo in 1960 leaving a new nation, now known as Zaire. Independence brought turmoil and civil war which lasted for years. There were many okapis at Epulu when the fighting started, and it is thought that most were slaughtered.⁵⁸ Westerners were excluded from the area, and the future of the animal in its native land seemed bleak indeed. In time, however, the government stabilized, and the Epulu okapi station was reopened.

Since 1970, a few okapis have actually been sent out of Zaire,⁵⁹ only one of which, however, has come to America, a female that arrived at the Cincinnati Zoo on October 15, 1986.⁶⁰ This animal was acquired through the dealer Mark Smith who invested a huge sum and spent several years working on the project.⁶¹ Given the high cost and difficulty in bringing new animals out of Africa, zoo professionals generally agree that if okapis are to continue as zoo exhibits, it will only be

through successful propagation of animals already in captivity. As of February 18, 1987, there were said to be 71 okapis in zoos throughout the world, of which 22 were living in the United States.⁶² They are being carefully maintained, and it is highly unlikely that one of them could be made available to a circus.

With fond memories of both "Aribi" and his offspring "Mister G," we close the story of the only circus okapis.

Footnotes

1. Bernard Heuvelmans, *On The Track of Unknown Animals* (New York: Hill and Wang 1959), p. 38.
2. Dr. David Macdonald (Ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Mammals* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1984) p. 534.
3. William Bridges, "An Okapi Comes To The Zoological Park," *Bulletin*, New York Zoological Society, XL, 5 (Sept.-Oct., 1937), p. 135 at 136. Also see Sir Harry Johnston "The Okapi" included in *Animals of the World* (Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1947) pp. 241-244.
4. Bridges, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-139.
5. Herbert Lang, "In Quest of the Rare Okapi," *Bulletin* New York Zoological Society, XXI, 3 (May, 1918), pp. 1601-1613.
6. Bridges, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-142. Bridges gives August 10 as the arrival date, but Antwerp Zoo records show August 9, 1919 as the date.
7. Bent Jorgensen, "The Story of the Okapis in Zoos," *International Zoo News* (Zeist, Holland: Zoo-Centrum) VI, 3 (May-Sep., 1959) p. 52.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 53; Bridges, *op. cit.*, p. 143; and James Fisher, *Zoos of the World—The Story Of Animals In Captivity* (Garden City, N.Y.: The Natural History Press, 1967), pp. 197-198.
9. Marvin L. Jones, "The Okapi (Okapi johnstoni) In Captivity" (San Diego: unpublished manuscript, 1977). Mr. Jones is registrar for the San Diego Zoo. His paper rationalizes into a single list all the captive okapis identified in the studbook kept by the Antwerp Zoo and in the Bulletins of the former Congo Forestry Department.
10. *Ibid.* Also see Bridges, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
11. Bridges, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
12. William Bridges, "A Visit To Brother Joseph," *Animal Kingdom* (New York Zoological Society) L, 2, pp. 37-44.
13. Bridges, "An Okapi Comes To The Zoological Park," p. 135 and 143-146.
14. Jones, *op. cit.*
15. Lee S. Crandall, *The Management of Wild Mammals In Captivity* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964) p. 619. Also see Jorgensen *op. cit.* (p. 53).
16. *Billboard*, March 27, 1954, pp. 1 and 44.
17. See, for example, *Billboard*, June 2, 1951, p. 47 reporting that difficulty in loading a giraffe during menagerie teardown distracted the Washington, D.C. audience in that end of the big top. From personal observation (Atlanta, 1954), your author can attest that the menagerie teardown diverted attention from the show.
18. *Billboard*, June 18, 1955, p. 58. Additionally, the writer made detailed lists of animals in the Ringling-Barnum menagerie in Atlanta in 1954 and 1955. The arrivals of the new animals in 1955 were further described by menagerie Supt. C. R. Montgomery and show vet Dr. Wm. Y. Higgins in 1966 conversations with the author. Also see C. P. Fox, *A Ticket To The Circus* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1959) p. 128 with a copy of April 3, 1955 letter from Henry R. North to F. J. Zeehandelaar confirming order for animals including the Grevy Zebras and small male African elephant that would turn out to be "Diamond."
19. Henry Ringling North, in litt, April 22, 1967.
20. *Billboard*, Nov. 13, 1954, p. 116.
21. *Billboard*, Dec. 25, 1954, p. 50.
22. *Ibid.* Also see *Billboard*, November 13, 1954, p. 116 and January 29, 1955, p. 78.
23. *Ibid.* Also, North *op. cit.*
24. North, *op. cit.* and *Billboard* December 25, 1954, p. 50.
25. McCormick Steele "African Jungle Freak" in *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Magazine & Program*, 1955 Edition, pp. 13 nad 66. Also see Jones, *op. cit.*



Ringling's second okapi, "Mister G," born at Brookfield Zoo and shown here in 1961 at Bob Dietch's Kiddie Zoo, Fair Lawn, New Jersey. William Elbirt photo.

26. Male "Bilota" came to the Bronx in 1949. "Congo" the Zoo's first one died in 1952. See: Jones, *op. cit.*
27. Steele, *op. cit.* and *Billboard*, March 5, 1955, p. 52.
28. Bill Wolf "Uncle Sam's Ark" *Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing Company) Vol. 228, No. 23, Dec. 3, 1955 p. 31. The Ringling okapi is pictured at the Clifton, N.J. quarantine station but is not identified as the circus animal. See accompanying illustration.
29. See above *Billboard* references.
30. This ad is one and the same as that shown me in 1955 by Adams. Joe Bradbury obtained it from the old man's estate.
31. Chang Reynolds "The Al G. Barnes' Big Four-Ring Wild Animal Circus—Seasons of 1919 and 1920," *Bandwagon* XXVIII, 2 (Mar-Apr. 1984) p. 11.
32. Chang Reynolds "Al G. Barnes' Big Four-Ring Wild Animal Circus—1921 Season," *Bandwagon* XXVIII, 5 (Sept.-Oct., 1984) p. 5.
33. New York Times March 6, 1955, p. 2x.
34. Steele, *op. cit.*
35. This regulation is mentioned in *Billboard* June 4, 1955, p. 58, but the story erroneously says the Ringling okapi was in quarantine at the National Zoo, Washington, D.C. when in fact it was at U.S.D.A.'s Clifton, N.J. farm.
36. Anonymous "Nature's Oddest Oddity," *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows—Route, Personnel and Statistics for the Season of 1955* (Sarasota: R.B.B.B., 1955) p. 100.
37. *Billboard*, March 10, 1958, p. 63.
38. North, *op. cit.* Also see *Billboard* Aug. 27, 1955, p. 82.
39. Robert Bean "America's First Okapi Baby," *International Zoo News* (Zeist, Holland: Zoo-Centrum), VI, 4 (Oct. Dec. 1959) p. 137.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Jones *op. cit.*
42. Crandall, *op. cit.* pp. 620-621.
43. Bean, *op. cit.* Also Sandra Kruczek, Chicago Zoological Park, in litt, Feb. 26, 1969.
44. Kruczek, *op. cit.* Also see Tom Parkinson in *Billboard*, April 25, 1960, p. 166.
45. Circus historian Albert House of Oakland, N.J. told the writer that he saw the okapi displayed at Madison Square Garden and that it did not do justice to such a great circus rarity. The animal was shown in a crudely constructed corral made of rough wide boards akin to a livestock holding pen with the result that visitors had to peek through the slats to see the okapi.
46. Dr. William Y. Higgins, in litt, January 25 and February 3, 1966.
47. Anonymous, "Ringling Animals To Remain Near New York," *The White Tops*, XXXI, 3 (May-June, 1958), p. 18.
48. Conversation with Bob Dietch May 1, 1967.
49. *Billboard* August 15, 1960, p. 50 and V. D. Rider, Jr., in litt, May 9, 1967.

50. William L. Elbirt "Operation Followup" *Bandwagon* V, 3 (May-June, 1961), p. 22 and "Operation Followup Part Two, R-B 1961 Menagerie" *Bandwagon* V, 5 (Sept.-Nov., 1961) p. 12.
51. William L. Elbirt, in litt, June 15, 1969.
52. Richard G. VanGelder, American Museum of Natural History, in litt, March 24, 1967.
53. The okapi studbook lists a wild born male (No. 138) named "Manvu," that arrived at the Leopoldville Zoo on August 31, 1959 and was said to have been sent to the Ringling circus in March 1962. Marvin Jones and the writer believe the circus part of this statement is incorrect because we have no corroborating evidence of any okapi being sent to America in 1962. Further, U.S.D.A. regulations would not have allowed Ringling Circus to exhibit an imported specimen.
54. North, *op. cit.*
55. Jones, *op. cit.*
56. C. P. Fox, in litt, April 10, 1983.
57. G. Lentz "Longevity Record Set For Okapi" *Newsletter*, American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, XIX, 12 (Dec., 1978) p. 12.
58. Jones, *op. cit.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp "Okapi—Current Population As Of February 18, 1987," printout from okapi studbook.
61. Marvin Jones, conversation, March 23, 1987.
62. Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp, *op. cit.*

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The Stowe Bros. Circus - A Real Family Tradition

Part Three

By John F. Polacsek

The activities of the Stowe family of circus performers and proprietors between 1860 and 1882 have been chronicled in two previous articles. This part covers the second generations' circus activities from the mid-1880s to the turn of the century. James Buchanan Stowe, the son of Elikiam Stowe; and his cousin John Frederick Stowe, the son of John Stowe, are the individuals who came to the forefront during this period.

James B. Stowe was a noted equestrian performer on the Adam Forepaugh Circus who later advanced into a management position on the Sells Bros. Circus. James joined the Sells show in 1882 as a performer, held the position of equestrian director the next year, and in 1884 was both equestrian director and ticket taker at the main entrance. It was his responsibility to see that the big top was ready before the public was allowed to come in. It was also his responsibility to settle disputes at the front door and among performers. If this was not enough, he also performed a four horse act in the center ring at the closing of every show.

The 1884 Sells route book noted that "under the able direction of Mr. Stowe, the arenic performance has been presented to the the public in an artistic and satisfactory manner. All objectionable features have been very carefully avoided, and nothing that could possibly give the slightest offense has been permitted to enter the 'Magic Circle.' The entertainment has been of a high order and fully acceptable to a discriminating public.

Portrait of John F. Stowe, circus and Tom show manager. John F. Stowe collection.



Mr. Stowe has filled the position with credit to himself and profit to his employers."

Stowe mediated the petty disputes which arose during the season. At Fergus Falls, Minnesota on June 14 he was approached by Professor Stirk who, while holding his hand to his mouth, complained that someone had hit him "on the bloody kisser" with a paper ball. Stowe told the Professor simply to get even with James Robinson, the ringleader of the affair. Practical jokes were not uncommon among performers or the staff on the Sells show. At Topeka, Kansas Allen Sells instructed Stowe to get him some loaded cigars. The next day Sells went out to his farm near Topeka to transact some business. Seating himself on the top rail of a fence to view his property, Sells lit a cigar. An explosion followed after which Sells found himself on the ground. He had forgotten that his cigars were loaded.¹

James Stowe stayed with Sells Brothers for the next two years. In 1886 while he was equestrian manager on the Sells second unit—the United States Circus—he was joined by his cousin Burt Stowe. Burt was in charge of the concert and his wife, who was one of the Betram sisters, was one of its features according to the *New York Clipper*.²

James also performed while acting as equestrian manager and had a small diamond brokerage business on the side where he sold diamond pins to performers on time.³ This second income could be useful considering his occupational hazards. While performing in the ring at Niles, Ohio on May 21, he was thrown from his horse and slightly injured.⁴ James decided at the end of the season that it was time to move on.

Columbus, Ohio was a center of circus activity in the 1880s and James Stowe joined the Miller and Freeman Circus which was based there. This ten cent circus started in 1886 as the Miller, Okey & Freeman New United Monster Railroad Show. Doctor W. W. Freeman had some experience with circuses while Charles Miller and Thevor Okey were Columbus theater managers. Okey dropped out of the firm after one year.

Charles H. Day noted in mid-March that when Dr. Freeman had been in New York on business the show was already titled Miller, Stowe & Freeman. The show was to be greatly enlarged in all areas except the price of admission which was to remain a dime.⁵

Day wrote a story about Dr. Freeman who was actually a druggist in Columbus. One day a man stopped in his store and for fifteen minutes stated all of his symptoms to Freeman. He then concluded by

saying "Doctor, what do you think I need? I am feeling powerful bad." At that point Doc's mind had wandered off to his circus interests and he answered: "Six lengths of reserved seats with cushions and backs, ten rows of seat plank, uprights and jacks, one ring carpet, two Kidd's lights, one door marquee and two center-

The spring of 1888 was a circus fan's dream in Columbus, Ohio as Sells Bros., Barnum and Bailey, and Miller & Freeman all were in town within a two week period. James Stowe was manager of the annex on the latter show that season. From *Columbus Dispatch* April 25, 1888. John F. Polacsek collection.

MILLER & FREEMAN'S
NEW UNITED
Monster Railroad Shows!

WILL. EXHIBIT A7

COLUMBUS, ONE WEEK, Commencing April 23,
Cor. Long and 5th Sts.

COMBINING THE LARGEST AND BEST CIRCUS
With the most Stupendous Menagerie on the Road.

Exhibited at Prices within the reach of all. Adults 20c, Child dress under 9, 10c.

SPECIAL NOTICE—Prof. NED HATHAWAY will make one of his terrific Parachute Descents, in full view of the assembled multitudes, from a Balloon a mile in the air—free to everybody—from the show Grounds **Monday, Thursday & Friday** and **Saturday**. The most Thrilling and Daring Exploit of the Times.

TICKETS will be on sale on Saturday, the 21st, at Freeman Bros.' Drug Store, 124 S. High, and at L. C. Collins' News Stand.

WILLIAMS' PINK PILLS FOR PALE PEOPLE

At Dr. C. C. Coffey's "New Britain" Dispensary, 100 N. 10th St., New Britain, Conn.

Paine's Celery Compound

FOR Women, Invalids, Menstrual Disorders, Rheumatic Pains, Headaches, Stomach Troubles, Indigestion, and Laid-Off Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines.

WEAK NERVES
 "I have been suffering from nervous prostration for several years, and have been unable to do any work. I have tried many remedies, but have not found any relief. I have now taken Paine's Celery Compound, and feel much better. I am able to do my work, and am much more cheerful than I was before." — J. H. Smith, New York.

RHEUMATISM
 "I have been suffering from rheumatism for several years, and have been unable to do any work. I have tried many remedies, but have not found any relief. I have now taken Paine's Celery Compound, and feel much better. I am able to do my work, and am much more cheerful than I was before." — J. H. Smith, New York.

KIDNEY COMPLAINTS
 "I have been suffering from kidney complaints for several years, and have been unable to do any work. I have tried many remedies, but have not found any relief. I have now taken Paine's Celery Compound, and feel much better. I am able to do my work, and am much more cheerful than I was before." — J. H. Smith, New York.

DYSPEPSIA
 "I have been suffering from dyspepsia for several years, and have been unable to do any work. I have tried many remedies, but have not found any relief. I have now taken Paine's Celery Compound, and feel much better. I am able to do my work, and am much more cheerful than I was before." — J. H. Smith, New York.

CONSTIPATION
 "I have been suffering from constipation for several years, and have been unable to do any work. I have tried many remedies, but have not found any relief. I have now taken Paine's Celery Compound, and feel much better. I am able to do my work, and am much more cheerful than I was before." — J. H. Smith, New York.

AMUSEMENTS.

GREAT LONDON
Museum!!
 50 NORTH HUGH STREET,
 NOW OPEN.

A new attraction to the city of New York. An entire village of London, with its streets, houses, and shops, as they are, and as they were, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. A most interesting and instructive sight. Admission free.

FAREWELL APPEARANCE
SELLS BROTHERS'
 ENORMOUS
United Shows!

At Columbus, Cor. of Long and
17th Streets,

Friday, May 11th.

BARNUM - BAILEY

15 NEW UNITED

SHOWS!!



P. T. Barnum's Greatest Show on Earth

FOREVER UNITED TO THE
Great London Circus

Great London Circus

10 TREMENDOUSLY BIG SHOWS COMBINED 10

1 Circus in 2 Rings. 2 Menageries in 2 Tents.
 Home Fair, 300 Horses in special Tent. Paris Olympia Hippodrome.
 Huge Elevated Stage Performances. Museum of Living Wonders.

JUMBO as natural as life, and his big **SKELETON**
CAPT. PAUL BOYTON, the Aquatic Marvel.



Real Wild Moorish Caravan. Genuine
Trot of Wandering Bedouins,
Algerian Dancing Girls,
Arabian Horses, War Weapons, etc.
Thrilling Races, Burning Fests,

Japanese Troupe of Experts.
100 Spectacular and Novel Stunts, 500 Phenomenal and Amazing Performances, 1,000 New Features never seen before. "Impossible to produce another such show."

Performances every day, 2 and 5 p. m.
Shows open at 11:30 and 5:30 p. m. Admission to all, 30 cents. Children under 9 years, 10 cents. All logic remain up until 2 o'clock at night.

Will exhibit in SPRINGFIELD. Saturday, May 13th. 120 25 mil 5 30

STOWE & LONG'S CIRCUS! Menagerie, Wild West and Balloon Show



WILL EXHIBIT AT LEBANON,

Friday, May 10, 1889.

The only show of strictly original & unique and brilliant features coming this year. Terrific PARACHUTE DESCENTS from an altitude of 1000 feet by action and interest. Grand balloon ascension. The most athletic and expert vaulting and tumbling and most superb general performance and the finest clown's THAT EVER AMUSED AN AUDIENCE.



Remember the Date.

Grand Free Street Parade Daily.
ONE TICKET ADMITS TO ALL.

Ad for Stowe & Long Circus from *Lebanon (Ohio) Gazette* of May 2, 1889 featuring a balloon ascension. The title at the start of the season was Stowe, Long and Gumble. John F. Polacsek collection.

poles." The sick man was astonished and immediately left the store.⁶

The Miller, Stowe and Freeman Big 10 Cent Circus and Menagerie opened in Columbus on May 2, 1887 and spent the first week of the season there. A familiar face among the performers was James Robinson who was the show's star attraction. A great expense was supposedly incurred with Robinson's hiring, but the show advertised that they were "truly a dollar exhibition for a dime."⁷

The show pleased audiences as Frank Andress and his military band opened the performance with a beautiful overture followed by a fine grand entree. Next came a song by Dick Baker whose rich voice completely filled the canvas. Leaping by a corps of acrobats and equestrians

followed. James Stowe performed a hurdle act and a four-horse riding act. Lottie Miranda and the Whiting brothers then did their aerial acts.⁸ The final act consisted of an exhibition of graceful and fearless equestrianism by the acknowledged "King of the Ring" James Robinson. At the conclusion of his act on the second night he was presented with an elegant floral horseshoe which was over four feet in height.⁹

In 1888 James Stowe moved from part owner of the circus to manager of the annex. This fifteen car railroad show had 178 people and was titled Miller & Freeman's New United Shows. Charles Miller and W. W. Freeman were listed as owners with the management of the show being made up of the following people: Frank Miller, assistant manager; Alex Jacques, press agent; James Murray, equestrian director; Frank Andress, musical director; Gus Hill, manager of concert; Tom Berriman, superintendent of tickets; Abe Gumble, manager of refreshments; and John Lewis, side show orator. Frank Stowe, the brother of James Stowe, was leader of the side show band and played cornet.

The show opened in Columbus, Ohio on April 23 and spent its first week there. Over the next twenty-two weeks the circus traveled through eight states and two provinces, averaging 36 miles daily with the longest run being 178 miles. One of the main features of the show was a balloon ascension and parachute jump. This attraction went well for the first four days of the new season. On April 27, however, Professor Gillock, the aeronaut, had some problem inflating the balloon. It finally went straight up with the Professor sitting on a trapeze which was suspended from a closed parachute. When it was time to perform Gillock pulled the cord which was to loosen him from the balloon and open the chute--but nothing happened.

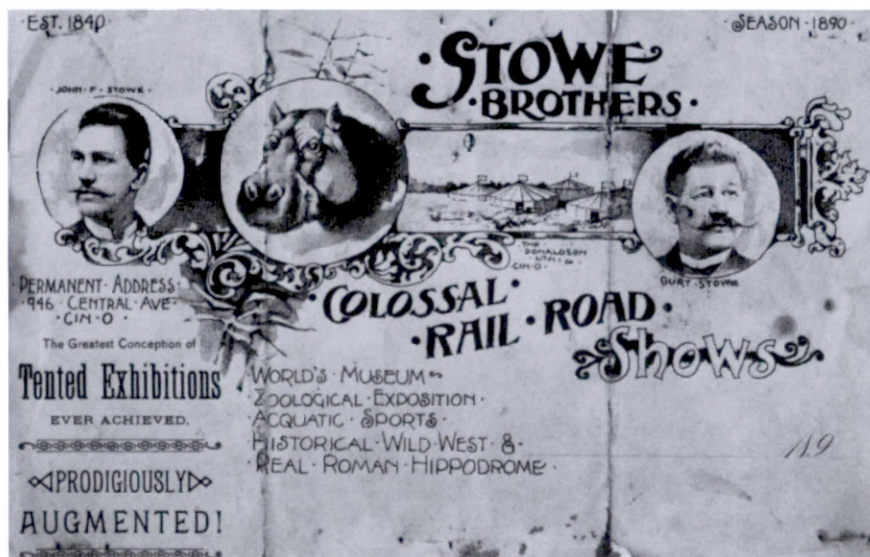
While he was busy trying to work the parachute free, the balloon began to de-

scend. Suddenly the chute billowed out with a balloon above and the Professor below. He swung down and hung from the trapeze by his hands when he was about 100 feet from the ground, getting ready to light on his feet. He finally dropped on a porch roof, only to have the balloon take off again and come down a short distance away.¹⁰ The next day Professor Colby, another aeronaut with the show, made a beautiful ascension from the circus grounds without any problems.¹¹ Later in the season Professor Hathaway, the show's third aeronaut, had the misfortune of coming down too close to a house, striking a chimney and injuring himself.¹²

Not all the show's problems occurred in the air. While the train was enroute near Mikanna Station, Ohio on the Chicago and Pittsburgh Railroad, it ran into a landslide. The passenger coaches and stock were not damaged, but the flats containing the wagons were completely wrecked. The damage was \$3000 and a cook on the show was killed.¹³ On June 3 Miller & Freeman sustained another wreck near Springfield, Massachusetts. The flat carrying the canvas wagon struck a switch in such a manner as to cause its derailment and that of the car following. Both cars were thrown down an embankment, injuring five men. To top it all off, at that time Doctor Freeman was not on the show as several days previous he went to Boston where he was confined to bed with inflammatory rheumatism. Miller was also away, having to leave the show for Columbus two weeks prior on account of illness.¹⁴

On June 21 while the circus was performing at Marlborough, Massachusetts, Professor Charles Colby, the balloon ascensionist, met with a very painful accident. While trying to land his parachute in a safe area he struck a two story house, causing a compound fracture of his left

Letterhead for the Stowe Bros. Circus of 1890. John F. Stowe collection.



Coming in All Its Splendor!

STOWE BROS.

New Colossal R.R. Shows

—AND—

Historical Wild West Exhibition.



Realistic Scenes of Wild Prairie Life in the Far West.

EVERYTHING BRIGHT AND NEW.

—THE GRANDEST, FINEST, LARGEST AND—

BEST SHOW IN THE WORLD

—EXHIBITING AT—

POPULAR PRICES

Finest Acrobats, Riders and General Performers with this aggregation that has ever visited your City.

4—VERY, VERY FUNNY JESTERS—4

Real Indians, Cowboys, Scouts, Sharp Shooters and Bucking Bronchos.
In fact everything pertaining to constitute a genuine Wild West Show.

TRAINED ANIMALS OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS.

Grand Street Parade at 10 a. m.

FREE, FREE, FREE PARACHUTE EXHIBITION

On the grounds before the doors open.

Remember we never disappoint. The date is fixed and cannot be changed and will positively exhibit at

Findlay, Saturday, May 10th.

RAIN OR SHINE.

Two Performances, 1 and 7 p. m.

Ad for Stowe Bros. Circus from *Findlay (Ohio) Courier* of April 26, 1890. This show was owned by John F. and Burt Stowe. John F. Polacsek collection.

leg. He afterwards fell to the ground and suffered other injuries to his head and body.¹⁵

The tents were blown down during a gale on June 23 at Leominster, Massachusetts, as hundreds of spectators became panic stricken. Many injuries resulted and the showmen suffered a loss of several thousand dollars that day.¹⁶

Considering the events of the year it is not hard to understand why the Miller & Freeman equipment was offered for sale in a December 1888 *Clipper*. The inventory included a train of railroad cars, 25 head of baggage stock, 5 head of ring stock, 13 baggage wagons, eight cages, a bandwagon, a ticket wagon, a chandelier wagon, 46 lengths of seats which were twelve high, 10 lengths of reserve seats which were eight high, a big top consisting of a 120 foot round top with two 50 foot middles, and an 80 foot menagerie top.¹⁷ Apparently there were not many takers as in February 1889 the show was

advertised for sale at auction. It was reported then that Walter L. Main acquired some of the equipment, but the disposition of the remainder can only be speculated upon.¹⁸

There is a possibility that a newly organized Columbus wagon show--titled Stowe, Long and Gumble Circus, Menagerie and Balloon Shows--purchased the rest of the equipment. This ten cent circus opened on April 25, 1889 at Hawks Station or Vinton, Ohio. It was operated by James Stowe, Harry Long who had a dog act, and Abe Gumble who ran a clothing store in Columbus and managed the concessions on the 1888 Miller & Freeman Circus. The troupe played a few days around Columbus, then played the town for a week beginning April 29. A balloon ascension drew people to the show grounds for the one ring performance.¹⁹

The roster included the following: Stowe, Long and Gumble, owners and managers; Matt Smith, press agent; Prof. Ned Houston and a band of twelve pieces; Harry Long, treasurer; Robert Whittaker, equestrian director; Prof. White and his dog and pony circus; three Martinetti brothers, acrobats; James Stowe, J. Preson and Robert Whittaker, equestrians. Other performers were Miss Downie, Sam Rheinhardt, Downie & Melville, J. Booker, Ben Downie, the Braham brothers, Ko-Ko-Ana, Frank Sparks, Frank Gillett, Edwin Martinetti, Mlle. Lorretto, Miss Barretto, and Leon Kimmell. The concert performers were Duet and Fortenbeaugh, Ainsley & Downie, Nellie Rivers, Kitty Mead, Montana Frank and Buckeye George. Prof. Jewell, Prof. H. Gruber, Charles Richmond and William Borchers were connected with the balloon ascension. The sideshow included Max Zimmerman, manager; Lew Zimmerman, assistant manager; John Lewis, talker; Capt. Lovavovetish; Jasper, Zulu; Millie Jasper; Baldwin Allen, half horse and half man; Lew Smith; and Jack Smith's black band of ten musicians.²⁰ Jake Posey, the last of the forty horse drivers, started in show business on this circus by driving a six horse bill wagon on the advance.

The show proceeded west through Ohio with performances at Springfield on May 6 and Dayton on May 7. They added the words "Wild West" and the announcement of a street parade to their advertising at this time.²¹ A new addition to the show was four cubs from one of the lions, an indication that the show carried a menagerie.²²

Circus day brought a great number of people into town and although the parachute drop, the riding and the acrobatics were good, the show had some unsavory followers attached to it. There was a crowd of gamblers and fakirs who accompanied the troupe and one local editor complained that gambling devices were being worked on all sides and pickpockets were numerous. It was also pointed out that the show managed to work off a great deal of counterfeit money in Franklin and Waynesville, but in Lebanon the

people were prepared and very little was put into circulation.²³

When the Stowe, Long and Gumble Circus rolled into Wilmington, Ohio for a May 17 performance, the editor only noted that it was a small show with two or three good acts, possibly because the show failed to take a newspaper ad. He objected to the "Hangerson" who worked swindling games on the show grounds.²⁴ From here the show headed south-east for an exhibition in Maysville, Kentucky on May 19 and at Owensburg, Kentucky on June 15.

The show carried a lot of grift and its epitaph was best written by Max Zimmerman in the *Billboard* some years later: "I do remember the Stowe, Long & Gumble Show (Go Slow and Stumble). It was the first circus I traveled with. I opened with the show at Hawks Station, Ohio and stuck to it until the sheriff took away the last stake down on the Green River in Kentucky. I ran the kid show, while Gus Norton and Ed Cross had the privileges. I was present at Maysville, Kentucky when Ed Cross was shot to death. We had a big show--several hundred heads of stock (nearly all mortgaged), and several hundred people."²⁵

With the loss of his show, James Stowe was out of the circus business for the next year. In 1891 he was equestrian director on the William Sells Circus and in 1892 held the same position on the Adam Forepaugh show. He joined the Walter L. Main Circus in 1893, again as equestrian director.

In 1896 the Stowe Brothers Circus title was again on the road, this time under the command of the two Stowe brothers--

The Stowe Bros. Circus used this songster in the early 1890s. Ringling Museum of the Circus collection.



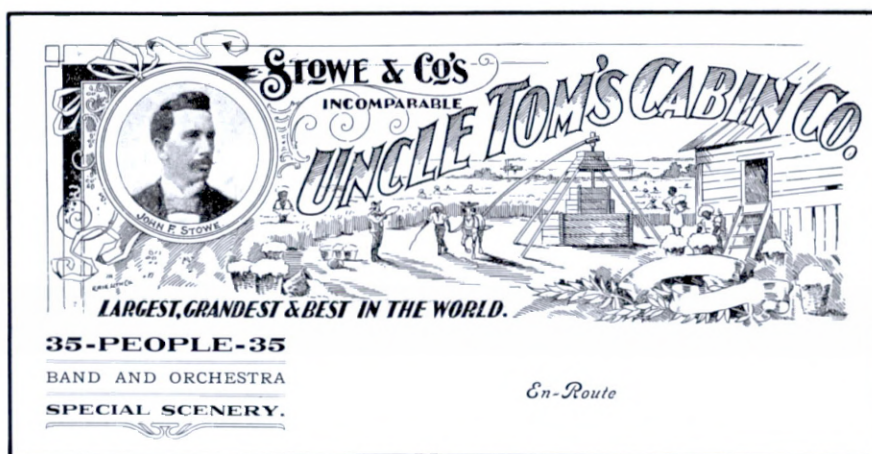
Frank and James. For the previous decade Frank had been active in the circus field. In 1886 he and Andy Showers operated a flat boat show in the South with the entertainment drifting from town to town.²⁶ Frank played in the annex band on the 1888 Miller & Freeman Circus, and the following year went on the ill fated Stowe, Long & Gumble Circus. In 1892 the Frank Stowe and Co. Circus opened at New Albany, Indiana on February 26, played Paducah, Kentucky for four days, then transferred to new cars. The show then chartered the paddlewheel steamer *John Fowler* at Jeffersonville, Indiana and became a nautical circus. The 147 foot long steamer carried the entire show, and they played the ports of the Ohio River and its tributaries.²⁷

The Stowe Brothers Circus of 1896 opened at Vinton, Ohio, the same city where Stowe, Long and Gumble started their 1889 tour. Not much is known of the show other than that Frank Stowe was on the advance and that they traveled by railroad for a portion of the season. After a number of June and July dates in West Virginia and Kentucky, the show's route is hard to trace and it may have closed.²⁸ With the end of this circus, Frank Stowe's activities become difficult to follow, but his brother left a clear trail.

From 1900 until 1907 James Stowe was the 24 hour man on Forepaugh-Sells, and from 1908 until 1910 he held the same job on Barnum and Bailey. He died of heart failure on November 1, 1910 while his passenger coach was coming into Greenwood, Mississippi. He was 52. When the Barnum show learned of his death the next day at Yazoo City, Mississippi all of the flags were floated at half mast in his honor.²⁹

The second Stowe to rise to prominence during this time was John Frederick Stowe, the son of John Stowe of Berrien Springs, Michigan. The Burr Robbins Circus of 1884 and 1885 listed an acrobat by the name of John T. Stowe. Late in 1885, John Stowe was attached to the King, Burke & Co.'s Allied Show which was performing at Signor Faranta's Iron Theater in New Orleans. This indoor circus opened on October 19 and had among its performers John F. Stowe who was listed as a quick-change artist.³⁰ It is believed that Stowe stayed with King & Burke for the next two years. In August 1887 the *Clipper* stated that Stowe would go with the Scribner & Clements Circus where he would act as the amusement director of their 60 horse wagon show.³¹

Stowe was obviously in demand. While Scribner & Clements claimed to have hired him for the 1888 season, the King and Franklin Circus advertised that they had "Jolly Johnnie Stowe" who was "acknowledged by all to be the funniest clown in America." It was further noted in their heralds that he was the only clown of the day who could wear the mantle of the great clown Grimaldi. When the King & Franklin show opened on



Letterhead for John F. Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin Co. from the late 1890s. Pfening archives.

April 24 at Roanoke, Virginia, however, John Stowe was not among the company.

Early in April 1888 an ad in the *Clipper* noted that the John Stowe Circus desired musicians, two strong altos to double on first and second violins, and a strong solo B flat cornet player. The applicants were to address W. F. Kemp's Hall, Athens, Tennessee as the season was to start April 21.³² The show actually opened the first week of May in Cincinnati and spent five weeks in the Queen City. At the close of this run they added Prof. Morris's equine paradox and went on the road as the Stowe Brothers Circus, owned by John F. and his brother Burt making it a circus actually owned by brothers.³³

This troupe traveled through Ohio in June and July.³⁴ News from the show in the *Clipper* noted that the clown Sam Dickey had been sick for a few weeks and that Charles H. King the banjoist was in charge of the concert and laying out the people in the hotels.³⁵ After dates in Ohio and West Virginia the show chartered the 122 foot long paddlewheel steamer *General Dawes* to transport the show, eventually carrying it up the Little Kanawha River in Kentucky.³⁶ The show wintered in Cincinnati where in December Mrs. Stowe presented John with a baby girl.³⁷

The 1889 season found two Stowes advertising for people in the *Clipper*. James Stowe was organizing the Stowe, Long and Gumble Circus in Columbus, while John Stowe was putting together his show at Louisville. The Stowe Brothers Colossal Show of 1889 opened in Cincinnati for four weeks starting on April 22, then traveled by rail, performing at least in Ohio and Indiana. The staff included: Stowe brothers, proprietors and managers; John F. Stowe, manager; Burt Stowe, business manager; Harry Seymour, treasurer; I. J. Westwood, secretary; T. J. Tremaine, press agent; J. Falkner, railroad contractor; I. L. Lockwood, master of transportation; George Jennier, equestrian director; Fred Leavens, and 15 assistants made up the advance.

The performers were: George Jennier, the Ashton brothers, John Shields, Master Hennier, George Gun, Marx & Alonzo, Master Shields, D. L. Nichols, Alex. Scafar, Maggie & George Day, N. S. Wood, Harry Blufften, D. T. Cameron, and J. Hollywood. The wild west performers were Chief Running Deer, John Deer, Man-No-Qua-Ta, Kis-Ko, Os-Qui-Li-To, Red Beaver, Split Bark, Rolling Thunder, Kentucky Frank, Buckeye George, Yellowstone Vic, Texas John, Rattlesnake Dave, and Wild Horse Harry.

The concert included: Signor Del Fuego, W. H. Hickey, Clark & Gilmore, George Day, M. J. Foley, Minnie Allen, James Ryan, Alice Fuego, Nina Jennier, Tillie Deer and Clarence Arnold's band of ten pieces. The rest of the show's staff included P. McNerey, boss canvasman with 25 men under him; Ed Smith, property boss with 5 assistants; Harry Nash, wardrobe; Ed Kearney, boss hostler. There were 43 horses on the roster, and 10 railroad cars. The performance was presented under a 125 foot round top with three 40 foot middle pieces.³⁸

The season was not without problems. On August 13 while at Vincennes, Indiana, John Deer (aka Split Bark) was shot by an off-duty policeman who was drunk. The policeman reportedly abused Deer and struck him with a mace. They then fought, after which the cop fired five shots, one of which hit Deer in the thigh. The show also advertised for a boss canvasman stating that "none but sober and responsible men write." The show also needed a reliable agent, a good knockabout and singing clown, a good hostler to handle cars, and a chandelier man. The applicants were to write the show at East St. Louis, Illinois.³⁹

The staff changed drastically by late September. While the Stowe brothers and George Jennier still had their same positions, new faces included Fred Leavens, general agent; John Hays, master of transportation; A. S. Koland, contracting agent; H. S. Haley, master of canvas; Harry Shamlaw, master of stock; and C. A. Donaldson, manager of privileges.⁴⁰ The show proceeded south with performances in Arkansas and Alabama in September through November.

When the circus came into Mobile on November 16 it found that the contracting agent Fred Leavens had died three days prior after a severe attack of dysentery. Burt and John Stowe assumed charge of the arrangements and being unaware of any relatives decided to bury him in Mobile. The Stowes insisted on paying for the entire expense as they considered it their duty to one who had been a most faithful and valuable employee. The funeral of the 43 year old agent was attended by the entire company.⁴¹

The show continued in the South with performances in Alabama and Georgia through January of the new year. Cold weather persisted for a stand at Atlanta on January 17 and 18, but some 2000 people came out for each performance. The big draw of the show was the wild west, reported to be the first wild west ever exhibited under canvas in the South. Chief Running Bear, the famous warrior and chief of the Comanche Indians, along with other Indians and long haired westerners gave an exhibition of frontier life that was "intensely realistic and thoroughly sensational."⁴²

Notes from the show claimed that business was very good throughout the South. As the long season neared its end the employees presented John F. Stowe with a pure white solitaire diamond on his birthday. The Stowes were making plans for the spring season when several new railroad cars were to be added as was a new big top--a 140 foot round with three 50 foot middle. The larger big top would allow for new wild west hippodrome races on a 30 foot track.⁴³ The season of 36 weeks closed at Birmingham, Alabama on January 30 and the show was shipped back to winter quarters in Cincinnati.

The 1890 letterhead and heralds of the show claimed that they had been established in 1840 and this was their 50th annual tour. The circus opened in Cincinnati in April with the following staff: gener-

al managers, John F. and Burt Stowe; general advance agent, T. B. Long; contracting agent, Charles Ellis; assistant agent, A. O. Cass; boss billposter, Fred Gilbert and ten assistants; equestrian manager, Fred H. Leslie; treasurer, George L. Behrans; assistant treasurer, John Keenan; masters of canvas, M. T. Haley and Ed Kennedy and thirty men; master of stock, R. Rual and ten men; manager of side show, C. A. Donaldson; superintendent of wild west, Oregon Kit; and Prof. F. Long's military band of fourteen pieces.⁴⁴

The show headed north with performances in Ohio in May. At Findlay bad luck was with the show as the first wagon unloaded from the cars had both springs broken, and another heavy wagon had a wheel taken off when it was caught in the street car tracks.⁴⁵ To add insult to injury a tremendous shower in the afternoon cut short the performance, and at night the river rose so high that the grounds were flooded and no performance was attempted. It was decided to remain in Findlay until Monday, May 12 and give an afternoon performance.⁴⁶

The show turned west with performances in Indiana and Michigan in May, June and early July. Their route is sketchy for that year but they also played New York, Ohio and Indiana in September and October. The show again went into winter quarters in Cincinnati.

The early part of April of 1891 found John F. Stowe in Cairo, Illinois. An ad in the *Clipper* stated that he wanted performers and musicians to strengthen the show for the summer season and also needed performing dogs, ponies, goats, and monkeys.⁴⁷ By May Stowe was back in Cincinnati and advertising that he still needed musicians, a bar team, double trapeze and lady aerial artists.⁴⁸ When the show opened in the suburbs of Cincinnati late in May, the weather was bad which spoiled business, but they made up for it at the next two stands just outside Cincinnati.⁴⁹ Over forty years later Harry Lakola wrote the *Billboard* with his recollections of trouping with the John F. Stowe show that year. "John F. Stowe,

Covington, Kentucky, organized a small circus that spring," wrote Lakola. "I joined to do my specialty and clown on bars. It was a small affair, a 60 foot round top and two 40 foot middle pieces. But brand new from centerpole to stakes. Carried a German band of eight pieces.

"John F. Stowe was proprietor and general manager; Mrs. Mamie Stowe, treasurer and ticket seller; Burt Stowe, front door; and Ed Sloman, advance agent. Performers in the big show were Frank Morris and his dog and pony troupe featuring a midget horse; Elliot family, Tom, Jams, Polly and Annie, bicycle and unicycle riders, using the high-wheel velocipedes of that time; Will Irwin, head balancer on swinging trapeze; Mlle. Irwin, iron jaw; Bell Brothehrs, acrobats; Ashton Brothers, horizontal bars; D. L. Nichols, wire act; Chauncey Powell, contortionist and monkey act on swinging perch; Bill Gibbs and Tom McInerney, Roman Gladiator and statue act; Sam Dicky, Al Devaney and Sam Boydell, clowns.

"In the concert were John F. Stowe in his lightning-change act; Mamie Stowe, seriocomic; Burt Stowe, old Negro character, singing *I Love to Think of the Days When I Was Young*; Devaney and Ray, sketch team; Gibbs and McInerney, boxing and wrestling, meeting all comers; closing with the old reliable afterpiece, *Mr. and Mrs. Brown*.

"Here is a record I think is hard to beat. Along the Ohio and the Big Kana-wha rivers we traveled by steamboat, along the C. H. & D. Canal by canal boat and overland by rail or wagon. At start of the season we played all the suburbs around Cincinnati, six weeks in all, three-day stands. As we all stopped in hotels, we were allowed street-car fare to reach the show lot. There were cable cars then; motors and airplanes had not made an appearance or no doubt we would have used those. The show made money. The following season, much enlarged, it trav-

Tom shows often paraded, and Stowe's troupe was no exception as shown here around 1900. John F. Stowe collection.



eled south and, while playing Florida, united with the Pubbliones [sic] show and went to Cuba. I missed that treat, as I had gone west."⁵⁰

There are some inaccuracies in Lakola's account, but it notes that the show decided to get off rail and become a water circus for part of the season. Once they left the river systems they headed overland and south with performances in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida in December and January. After closing at Key West on January 17, the show sailed to Havana where they performed in connection with the Pubillones Circus.

The show did not go into winter quarters that year, but appeared in Cuba until late April of 1892. After four months the show returned to the United States but found that the Southern ports had been quarantined which forced the show to land in New York City on May 14. Immediately ads for musicians and trained animals were placed in the trade press with the note "consider one week's silence a negative."⁵¹ Exactly when the show reopened is unknown, but the route included dates in Maryland in July, and Pennsylvania dates in September.



In its early years John Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin show traveled by railroad. The car on the left is lettered "baggage and scenery car," while the one on the

ager of the Walter L. Main Circus in 1897. He still wanted to have his own circus and he struck a bargain with Main. At the end of the regular season Main leased nine cars to Stowe who then framed the Stowe Brothers International Shows and Hagenbeck's Trained Animal Exhibition.

Fortunately a transcript of the account books of the Walter L. Main Circus have survived. They give not only the route, but also some financial details of the Stowe and Hagenbeck Circus which lasted from November 9 to December 22 1897:

Date	Town	Profit/(Loss)
November 9	Rolla, Missouri	\$215.90
November 10	Marshfield, Missouri	(76.46)
November 11	Seligman, Missouri	97.17
November 12	Fayetteville, Arkansas	83.15
November 13	Fort Smith, Arkansas	218.76
November 14	Sunday	
November 15	Paris, Texas	128.09
November 16	Honey Grove, Texas	125.89
November 17	Wolfe City, Texas	195.90
November 18	Fort Worth, Texas	81.84
November 19	Meridian, Texas	(116.69)
November 20	McGregor, Texas	(96.50)
November 21	Sunday	
November 22	Cameron, Texas	(210.49)

right is lettered "John F. Stowe's Private Car." It was named the Erma, presumably after his wife. John F. Stowe collection.

November 23	Rogers, Texas	(27.10)
November 24	Goldwithe, Texas	46.02
November 25	Lampasas, Texas	(83.68)
November 26	Coleman, Texas	160.68
November 27	Bollinger, Texas	(229.35)
November 28	San Angelo, Texas	296.65
November 29	Sunday	
November 30	Brownwood, Texas	216.85
December 1	Temple, Texas	106.95
December 2	Navasota, Texas	2.88
December 3	Calvert, Texas	(223.00)
December 4	Bryan, Texas	(133.77)
December 5	Sunday	
December 6	Hempstead, Texas	(388.67)
December 7	Elgin, Texas	158.84
December 8	Austin, Texas	533.37
December 9	Georgetown, Texas	81.88
December 10	Taylor, Texas	(54.80)
December 11	San Marcus, Texas	60.06
December 12	Sunday	
December 13	San Antonio, Texas	123.87
December 14	San Antonio, Texas	(434.29)
December 15	Luling, Texas	(147.29)
December 16	Columbus, Texas	(28.97)
December 17-18	Enroute	
December 19	New Orleans, La.	228.70
December 20	New Orleans, La.	(135.20)

December 21 New Orleans, La. 22.70
December 22 New Orleans, La. (131.81)

The Main account books recorded the history of the show and its demise: "9 cars, Main leased to John Stowe, called Stowe Bros. Show. 40 or 50 horses, two elephants, six or seven cages. The prettiest outfit any show ever had. It was a terrible frost. Main lost \$3500.00 going and getting the show home etc. The printers lost heavily. Moreland did not get paid for feeding the people for two or three days. Performers and working men did not get anything the last two or three weeks and the last night Stowe walked away and hid. Danney Fitzgerald, Battey, Berris, St. John, Crandel, Rice, Bernard, John Kelly, Christie, and Doc Miller and the band stayed until the finish. The rest including Bickel and Watson, Stowe, Gilbertson, Tyebells, Jim West, Steve Miaco and all performers showed the yellow feather. Main and Fitzgerald stayed up all night to get the train out of town without attachments. The reasons for failure were bill car only one week ahead, paper not half strong enough, Stowe forgot to order his second edition, had to give all his attention to his lady friend. Walker [show print] shipped second addition too late and COD. Show could not move it. Weather was terrible bad. Snow in some towns. Performance was extra fine but management rotten. Performers weakened the night before closing in New Orleans and Stowe gave back about \$100.00 to the audience which was about \$10.00 more than he took in when he could have given the show with the trained animals, Crandel and St. John. Wallace show followed in New Orleans on another lot and done [sic] nothing and had a losing season. Sells Bros. also a big loser, season 1897, especially in Texas. Show was 8 cars back, one ahead and was bad size and took special service."⁵⁴ Thus ended the 1897 Stowe Brothes Cicus.

With this bad experience behind him, John F. Stowe concentraed his efforts on his Uncle Tom's Cabin Company. He took the show out for the 1898 season from his headquarters in Portland, Maine, planning to open under a canvas tent. For many years the show was successful, but he always had a longing to have a circus.

He once again ran away with the circus in 1912 when he became the manager of the Downie and Wheeler Circus which opened on March 9 at Valdosta, Georgia. The show was on thirteen cars with one ahead. A leaping the gap bicycle act was the free attraction.⁵⁵ As far as can be determined this was the last time John F. Stowe was in the circus business.

At the end of the 1912 season Stowe returned to Niles, Michigan and continued to improve his Tom show. By 1920 it had 50 people and carried the equipment behind a dozen automobiles and trucks. The performance was given under a tent which sat 2000 which was illuminated by a Delco electric lighting system.⁵⁶

As the Tom show popularity faded, he took out the temperance play "Ten Nights in a Barroom" in 1928. This new venture was not successful. The show itself made money, but with the loss of five cars in six weeks, the loss of the electric light plant, and the tent going up in flames it was a rough season. Unfortunately, the show was considered political in nature. Stowe related: "At Martinsville, Indiana I sat on the hotel veranda beside a man there for treatments at the health springs when our show calliope went by. 'There, look at that,' said the stranger, 'Republican stuff, to my certain knowledge there are 12 of those shows touring Indiana now for the Republicans.'"⁵⁷ Whether a political motive existed or not, the show was packed away at the end of the year and John F. Stowe retired.

The Stowe saga ended on May 19, 1939 when John F. Stowe died at his home in Niles, Michigan. He was the last of the long standing Stowe family in the outdoor show business. Thanks to those who helped with this project: Ted Bowman, Bob Brisendine, Albert Conover, John F. Stowe, and Fred Dahlinger.

FOOTNOTES

1. Townsend Walsh Scrapbook, Hertzberg, Circus Collection, San Antonio Public Library.
2. *New York Clipper*, May 29, 1886.
3. *Ibid.*, May 15, 1886.
4. *Ibid.*, May 29, 1886.
5. *Sporting & Theatrical Journal*, March 19, 1887.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Columbus Daily Times*, Columbus, Ohio, May 1, 1887.
8. *Ibid.*, May 3, 1887.
9. *Ibid.*, May 5, 1887.
10. *Columbus Dispatch*, Columbus, Ohio April 27, 1888.
11. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1888.



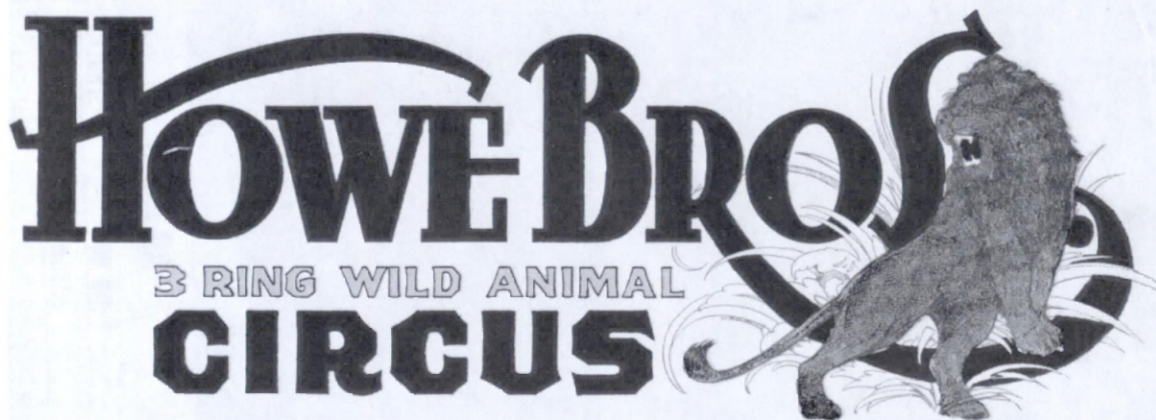
In later years Stowe's Tom show traveled by trucks. John F. Stowe collection.

12. *Clipper*, May 5, 1888.
13. *Ibid.*, May 12, 1888.
14. *Dispatch*, June 4, 1888.
15. *Clipper*, June 30, 1888.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, December 8, 1888.
18. *Ibid.*, February 2, 1889.
19. *Columbus Post*, Columbus, Ohio, May 2, 1889.
20. *Clipper*, May 18, 1889.
21. *Lebanon Gazette*, Lebanon, Ohio, May 2, 1889.
22. *Ibid.*, May 9, 1889.
23. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1889.
24. *Wilmington Journal*, Wilmington, Ohio, May 22, 1889.
25. *Billboard*, November 21, 1914.
26. *Clipper*, April 17, 1886.
27. *Ibid.*, May 28, 1892.
28. *Ibid.*, July 25, 1896.
29. *Billboard*, November 12, 1910.
30. *New Orleans Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana, October 19, 1885.
31. *Clipper*, August 6, 1887.
32. *Ibid.*, April 7, 1888.
33. *Ibid.*, June 16, 1888.
34. *Ibid.*, June 14, 1888.
35. *Ibid.*, July 21, 1888.
36. *Ibid.*, August 18, 1888.
37. *Ibid.*, December 15, 1888.
38. *Ibid.*, August 10, 1889.
39. *Ibid.*, August 24, 1889.
40. *Ibid.*, October 12, 1889.
41. *Ibid.*, November 30, 1889.
42. *Atlanta Constitution*, Atlanta, Georgia, January 18, 1890.
43. *Clipper*, January 25, 1890.
44. *Ibid.*, May 3, 1890.
45. *Findlay Courier*, Findlay, Ohio, May 10, 1890.
46. *Ibid.*, May 12, 1890.
47. *Clipper*, April 11, 1891.
48. *Ibid.*, May 23, 1891.
49. *Ibid.*, June 20, 1891.
50. *Billboard*, December 28, 1935.
51. *Clipper*, May 21, 1892.
52. *Billboard*, October 29, 1921.
53. *Clipper*, August 12, 1893.
54. Walter L. Main Account Books, Albert Conover Collection, Xenia, Ohio.
55. *Billboard*, May 11, 1912.
56. *Paulding Democrat*, Paulding, Ohio, August 5, 1920.
57. *Niles Daily Star*, Niles Michigan, October 11, 1928.

BILL KASISKA'S LETTERHEADS

TOM ATKINSON, MGR.

ETHEL ATKINSON, TREAS.



Tom Atkinson toured the Howe Bros. Circus in 1937. He had been associated with other truck shows of the 1930s including Barney Bros. The title of this colorful letterhead is red outlined in black. The lion is in full color. Atkinson's name is in blue. The letterhead was designed and printed by the U.S. Printing & Engraving Co. of Kansas City, Mo.

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CHECKING ACCOUNT:	750.54
	<u>\$2,691.89</u>

RECEIPTS:

Remaining Postage	\$ 62.09
Dues	18,448.00
Subscriptions	3,010.00
Advertisements	2,848.00
Back Issue Sales	1,032.40
Bank Interest	1,097.00
1985 Convention & Auction	2,870.11
TOTAL	\$ 29,367.60

EXPENSES:

Bandwagon Printing	\$ 18,044.63
Bandwagon Expenses	6,691.74
Postage	1,433.12
Misc. Expenses	92.17
Bank Service Charges	90.83
TOTAL	\$ 26,352.49

Receipts	\$32,059.49
Expenses	- 26,352.49
	<u>\$ 5,707.00</u>

CASH ON HAND APRIL 30, 1986:

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TOTAL	\$5,707.00

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CIRCUS WINDOW CARDS

Window cards were the final innovation in print advertising for circuses. One presumes they were developed in response to shopkeepers' beefs about half and one sheets covering too much of their window space. The earliest surviving examples from the late 1890s and early 1900s were 10 1/2" by 14" or 13" x 18". They were for the most part horizontally illustrated, and seem to have been printed on a sporadic basis as they rarely appear on lithograph company shipping lists of the period.

Window or tack cards seem to have come into their own in the 1920s. By then their size was approximately 14"

x 24" which remains the standard to this day. Most of the known examples are uprights. The increase in size and change from horizontal to vertical illustration probably was due to their being used predominantly on telephone poles rather than in store windows. Since cards used in that application blocked nothing, there was no reason why they could not be larger and thus more easily seen.

The cards mirrored the patterns of lithograph usage. The larger shows used special art printed by the major houses such as Strobridge while the smaller

shows used stock designs of lesser quality. Both large and small circuses used window card date sheets.

In recent decades the window card has shown more staying power than the poster as many truck circuses which eschewed posters used them and many Shrine circuses, which rarely advertise with posters, availed themselves of the cards. Many of the classic stock designs have appeared on scores of titles while Ringling-Barnum, and on occasion other circuses, carry on the tradition of commissioned art. All cards reproduced here are from the Pfening archives. Fred Pfening III



The Sig Sautelle Circus used the classic elements of the performance--the clown, the rider, and the ringmas-



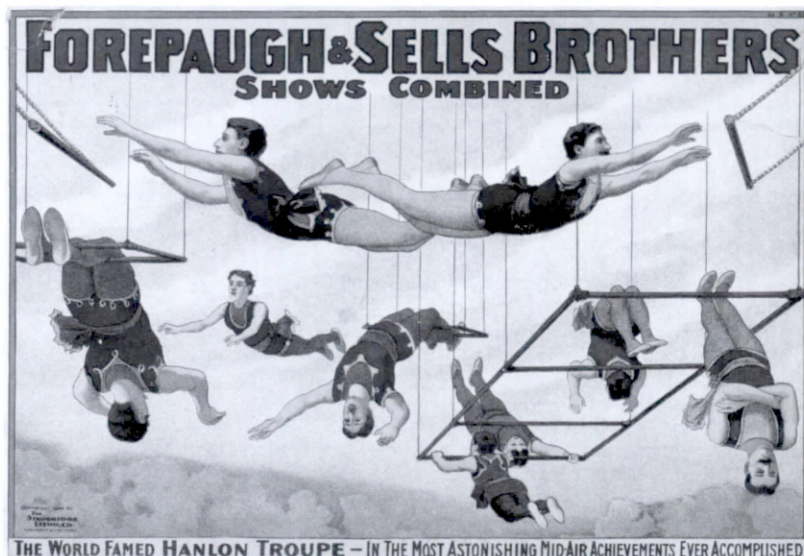
ter--in this fine window card about 1912.

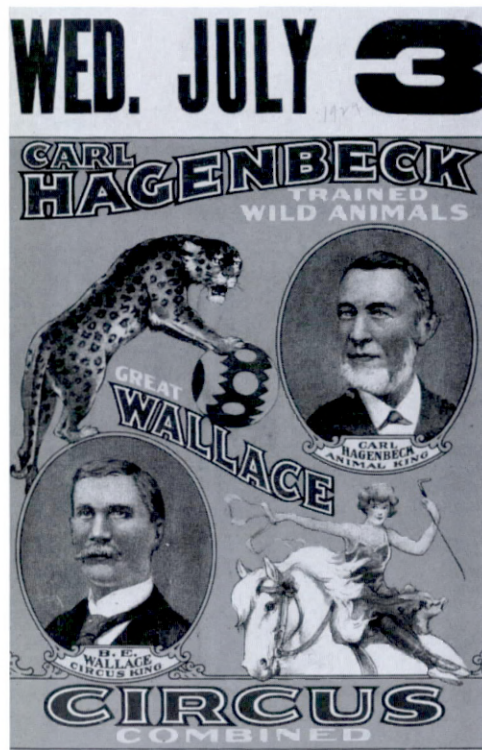
Erie lithograph printed this chariot race card for Sautelle about 1912.

In 1909 U. S. Lithographing did this card for the 101 Ranch Wild West.



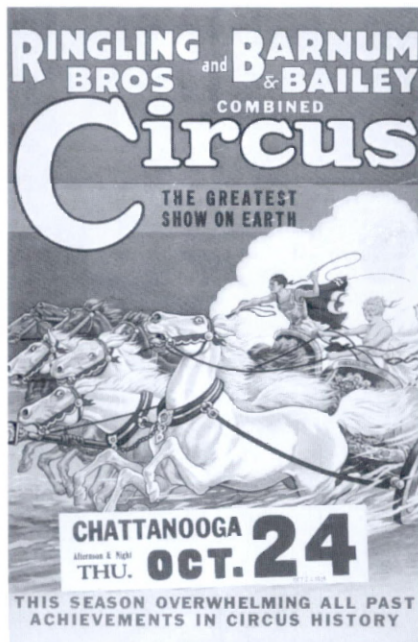
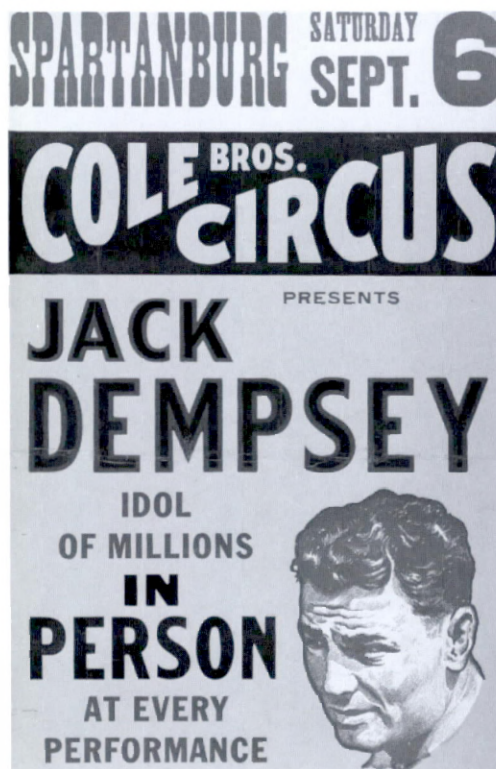
This 1899 Forepaugh-Sells card, printed by Strobridge, is one of the earliest known examples of the genre.





By the 1920s a blank space was design on to the card so the date could be shown. This Hagenbeck-Wallace example is from 1929.

Cole Bros. put Jack Dempsey on a window card in 1941.



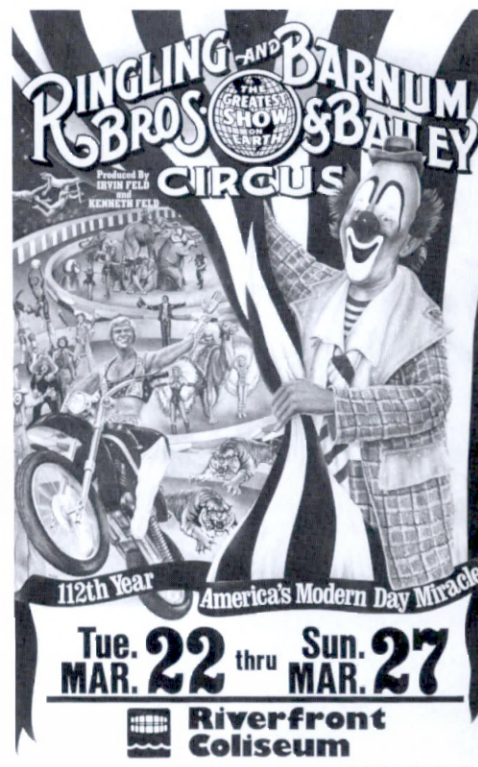
Roland Butler drew this flashy card in 1935 for Ringling-Barnum. It is signed "Roland" in the lower left hand corner.

Some cards, such as this one from Al G. Barnes in 1936, had date tags.



This Sam B. Dill card from the early 1930s was a typical stock design from Donaldson.

Ringling-Barnum has used excellent cards in recent years. This one dates from a 1982 appearance in Cincinnati.



"There's a Sucker Born Every Minute"

(But None of Them Ever Die)

by A. H. Saxon

Of all the pithy, eminently quotable statements by P.T. Barnum that might have become part of the English language's store of *bons mots*, it is remarkable that the one most everybody associates with his name—"There's a sucker born every minute"—was never spoken or written by him. In fairness to the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* and *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, both of which include the saying as their single entry under Barnum's name, it should be acknowledged that the editors of those works possessed sufficient caution to list it as "attributed" to him. Those among the showman's contemporaries who addressed the subject were unanimous in insisting he never said it; previous biographers have generally accepted their assertions; viewers of the recent CBS movie *Barnum* will have noted that the hero-narrator of that "true story," for all its other factual errors, indignantly declares at several points that he was never guilty of making such a statement.

None of these sources, however, has shed any additional light on the topic or, needless to say, made much impression on the host of journalists, songwriters, and others who continue to delight in laying the statement at Barnum's doorstep. At least one of his contemporaries—Joseph McCaddon, the brother-in-law of James A. Bailey, who certainly bore no love for the showman and was eager enough to attack him on other occasions—even went so far as to claim the "slang" meaning of the word was not in use during Barnum's lifetime. Regardless of how often Barnum deceived the public with such humbugs as Joice Heth and the Woolly Horse, McCaddon continues in the manuscript history of Bailey and the circus he wrote, he was too "shrewd an advertiser and well educated a man to directly accuse his public of ignorance, and of being suckers."¹

In letters from the 1840s to his intimate friend Moses Kimball of the Boston Museum, Barnum sometimes vulgarly used the word "suck" in both its noun and verb forms to signify a swindle or being deceived ("it was a suck," "got sucked," etc.); and as twentieth-century parents of schoolchildren have sometimes learned to their horror, the word still possesses the related meaning of something worthless in such expressions as "it sucks." In the nineteenth century "sucker" was often used to designate an inhabitant of the Upper Midwest, whose settlers at one time purified their drinking water by "sucking" it through straws; but Stuart Berg Flexner, in his *Listening to America*, traces its present-day meaning of "one as innocent as a suckling" as far back as 1831.² Certainly Barnum himself was aware of both meanings, as is evidenced by his once playing with the word at an 1875 political rally when, upon introducing a former governor of Illinois, he referred to the speaker as "a good, genuine



An impeccably attired Barnum gazes benignantly, yet somewhat warily, at the world in this photograph taken toward the end of his life. "I am the prelude of the greatness which is to come after me," as he modestly remarked during one of his speeches. Courtesy of the Barnum Museum, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Sucker, a citizen of Illinois," but also, amidst much appreciative laughter, as a "sucker" for having married a young woman.³

Ten years later, when the orthodox

minister F.E. Hopkins of East Bridgeport, in a temporary fit of pique, wished to attack Barnum as a hypocrite, the worst he could accuse him of was that he had once reputedly remarked that "the people like to be humbugged"—a statement that surely has a more authentic ring to it, although Barnum himself immediately replied that he had been "misquoted" and went on to explain that "I said that the people like to be humbugged when, as in my case, there is no humbuggery except that which consists in throwing up sky-rockets and issuing flaming bills and advertisements to attract public attention to shows which all acknowledge are always clean, moral, instructive, elevating, and give back to their patrons in every case several times their money's worth."⁴ He did not really deny having made the statement, it will be noted, but simply wished to qualify it with reference to the rather imaginative interpretation he had given the word "humbug" in his 1865 book on the subject, *The Humbugs of the World*; and his first use of the expression may date from around that time or, perhaps, from the period ten years earlier when, in conjunction with the publication of the first edition of his famous autobiography, he was traveling around the country delivering a lecture on the "philosophy" of humbug.⁵

"The people like to be humbugged," then, is one statement that may unequivocally be assigned to Barnum, and a number of his friends and associates, while not always certain of its exact wording, were in agreement on this point.⁶ But this still does not dispose of the "suckers" statement, of course, for obviously someone must have been responsible for it, and it remains a mighty good state-

Joseph T. McCaddon may have thought Barnum's contributions to the circus were exaggerated, but he readily admitted the showman was no "sucker" when it came to public relations. Pfening Archives.



ment. While researching his recently published book, *Only in Bridgeport: An Illustrated History of the Park City* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1986), Mr. Lennie Grimaldi chanced upon a tantalizing clue, which he communicated to me, in the files of the *Bridgeport Post*. In a typewritten story bearing a 1948 date, the claim is made that Barnum's great circus rival, Adam Forepaugh, made the statement in the course of a late 1880s newspaper interview. Upon being asked by the reporter if he might be quoted on this, Forepaugh nonchalantly replied, "Just say it's one of Barnum's slogans which I am borrowing for the occasion. It sounds more like him than it does me, anyway." The story's anonymous writer goes on to report that "Barnum is said to have personally thanked his competitor for the publicity—a gesture which made Forepaugh furious for having mentioned Barnum in the interview at all." Unfortunately, the source of the original interview is not given in this account, and Mr. Grimaldi has not succeeded in running it down. My own hunch, however, is that this

story also is apocryphal, considering the showman's haste to "explain" the comparatively innocuous statement with which he was charged in the 1880s by the Reverend Hopkins. As McCaddon justly observed, Barnum was too "shrewd" a businessman ever to lay claim to any such saying—a saying that most certainly would have given offense to a large portion of his circus patrons.

But there is another, more plausible tale concerning the origin of the statement, also stemming from McCaddon, which I am inclined to accept. He in turn received it from a friend, one Alex Williams, who was an inspector in the New York City Police Department. According to Williams, the expression was first used in the early 1880s by a notorious confidence man known to the police as "Paper Collar Joe" (real name, Joseph Bessimer). And the complete statement, as McCaddon reports it, was "There is a sucker born every minute, but none of them ever die."

An improvement over what has been ac-

cepted and broadcast till now, and in future, one would like to think, better attributed to "Paper Collar Joe" than to P.T. Barnum.

Footnotes

1. This manuscript has recently been acquired by the Historical Collections department of the Bridgeport Public Library. The statement in question appears on p. 317.
2. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982, p. 320.
3. *Bridgeport Standard*, 24 March 1875.
4. *Ibid.*, 1 and 2 October 1885.
5. See, e.g., Ch. 2 of *The Humbugs of the World* (New York: Carleton, 1865/66) for Barnum's defense of his peculiar brand of "humbug"; and, for references to his 1854 lecture "The Philosophy of Humbug," Barnum to Bayard Taylor, 4 and 24 August 1854, and Barnum to J.R. Trumbull, 11 December 1854, in *Selected Letters of P.T. Barnum*, ed. A.H. Saxon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 79-80, 85.
6. Barnum's friend Joel Benton, in his article "P.T. Barnum, Showman and Humorist," which appeared in the *Century Magazine* of August 1902, gives the saying as "The American people love to be humbugged." His onetime circus partner WC Coup, in his *Sawdust & Spangles* (Chicago: Herbert S. Stone, 1901), p. 35, recalled it as "The public likes to be humbugged." Of course, the showman himself may have been responsible for these variations. One gathers he was not averse to repeating the statement.
7. McCaddon MS, pp. 317-18.

BILL KASISKA'S LETTERHEADS



One of the most venerable names in the history of the outdoor amusement field, the John Robinson title was before the public before any of the Ringling brothers were born and was still in use after they had all died. This sheet dates from 1888 and contains no color. The wild west was an added feature of many circuses of the period, the result of the stunning success of Buffalo Bill.

CIRCUS LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF ADAM BARDY



For those who like to spend a nice quiet evening in reading of the "good old days", here is a book full of the interesting, adventurous life of Adam Bardy, especially of the roaring twenties and thirties, which includes circus life and describes the wholesome entertainment of those wonderful tented circus years.

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In the picture shown here, we see the end of the street parade, showing what a steam calliope looked like in those wonderful days of the circus street parade.

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